
French Security Policy After the Cold War

**Continuity, Change, and
Implications for the United States**

Philip H. Gordon

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Philip H. Gordon

Prepared for the
United States Army

RAND

PREFACE

This study is part of a broader project on the future U.S. role in Europe conducted within the Policy and Strategy Program of RAND's Arroyo Center. The study examines changing French security policies since the end of the Cold War in 1989 and analyzes the implications of French policy for the United States. The broader project examines Europe's evolution since the end of the bloc-to-bloc system and the future U.S. and U.S. Army role in European security. It is jointly sponsored by the U.S. Army Deputy Chief of Staff for Operations and Plans and the Training and Doctrine Command at Fort Monroe.

This study should be of interest to government officials, analysts, and military planners working on European political, security, and economic issues.

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Lynn E. Davis
RAND
1700 Main Street
P.O. Box 2138
Santa Monica, CA 90407-2138

SUMMARY

Over the past several years, a number of factors have converged to challenge some of the long-standing assumptions that lie behind French security policy. The end of the Cold War, German unification, the Persian Gulf War, acute pressures on the French defense budget, and growing domestic political and social problems have all come together to call into question the continuities that have marked French defense since the early 1960s. Analysts in both France and the United States have already begun to discern initial elements of change and to predict more to come. This report analyzes the factors that are putting pressure on France to change, the extent to which France has changed so far, the prospects for change in the future, and the implications of French policy for the United States.

The first and most important shock to France was the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe and the end of the continent's military and political division. More than most of its neighbors, France has always associated its national stature and prestige with the possession of military power, and particularly with the possession of an independent nuclear force. This status as the world's "third military power" (in the words of successive French presidents) was supposed to make France the political leader of Western Europe, earn respect and attention from the two superpowers, and perhaps more important, endow France with an advantage over its German neighbor and compensate for German economic strength. The disappearance of the "Soviet threat," however, by undermining the value and legitimacy of military power, has raised difficult questions about the country's military and nuclear priorities. Without a military threat to speak of, with pressing domestic and social problems, and with Germany no longer so preoccupied with security, many in France have begun to question the value of military "prestige" and to wonder about the logic of investing large sums in an independent nuclear force.

A second and related challenge to traditional French security policy was German unification. Not only did German unification decrease the relative size and wealth of France in Europe but it also had implications for France's cherished "independence." France could now hardly expect Germany to accept the constraints of European integration if France was unwilling to do the same in the military field. In the past, France had always managed to impose certain constraints on Germany that did not apply to France, but the new situation was

different: with a united Germany no longer in need of externally borrowed political legitimization and much less dependent on others for its security, France would now surely have to abandon much of its own independence if it wanted Germany to do the same.

A third major impetus to change in French security policy was the Persian Gulf War. The war starkly revealed many of France's operational military deficiencies and the limits to its supposed independence, showed that "Europe" in its present form was incapable of taking external or military action abroad, and demonstrated the great advantages of military cooperation with the United States. As a result, it suggested that France's concept of national military independence was bankrupt and underlined the need for closer military integration within Europe and with the United States. At the beginning of the Gulf crisis, French leaders affirmed their famous *différence* and insisted on France's independent political voice. But France's war-time solidarity with the United States was clear, and it suggested that closer French-American cooperation was in fact starting to come about.

The final set of factors pushing for change in French security policy is not geopolitical but fiscal: the French defense budget no longer seems adequate to fund the military programs that result from French ambitions. With numerous major programs ready to enter into their most expensive phases during the 1990s, foreign arms sales down from their mid-1980s peak, new priorities like satellites and strategic lift, and compelling political claims for spending on education and social welfare, it is unlikely that the French will be able to avoid major changes in recent plans for defense procurement.

Under these various pressures, French security policy since 1989 has displayed both change and continuity. On one hand, recent French decisions have called into question the long-standing nuclear priority in French defense, some French initiatives in Europe suggest a willingness to abandon the goal of national military independence, and there are signs beneath the surface that at least some French leaders would like to seek a more comprehensive military relationship with NATO and closer cooperation with the United States. On the other hand, however, traditional French goals of stature, influence, and autonomy seem as strong as ever, French reticence about American leadership and the primacy of NATO still seems acute, and France remains committed to preserving and maximizing its own national freedom of maneuver. The result is an uncertain and sometimes inconsistent security policy and a "domestic consensus" under greater strain than at any time since the mid-1970s.

The security policy area in which France has probably changed least is in its policy toward NATO. Ironically, France—long the Alliance's most revisionist member—has become its most conservative force, and France has resisted many of the revisions and adaptations other countries have proposed to bring the Alliance up-to-date. France still opposes and refuses to participate in NATO's integrated military commands and has not welcomed NATO's recent efforts to expand its geographical and political scope. Although some French leaders—particularly in the Ministry of Defense and in the opposition *Rassemblement pour la République* (RPR)—have begun to call for a more comprehensive French role in NATO, the present government still opposes what it believes to be a dominating American role in the Alliance. Paris has not found American promises to devolve responsibilities to Europe to have been fulfilled or even sincerely attempted.

French security policy within Europe has been somewhat more innovative. Animated by the desire to bind a united Germany into a European federation, France has energetically pursued the creation of a "European security identity" to be built initially around the Western European Union (WEU). In the French view, the WEU would eventually be fused with the European Community (EC) and eventually develop into a true European defense. It would cooperate closely with the United States but would not be subordinate to it. France's new willingness to accept constraints on its own sovereignty in the name of this European security identity is demonstrated best by two recent initiatives: a François Mitterrand–Helmut Kohl proposal to form an integrated European military corps (which other EC countries would be invited to join) and an emerging discussion in France about the "Europeanization" of the French nuclear force. It will be a long time before any truly integrated European defense is in place, but France's willingness to accept such a defense even as a long-term goal must be considered significant.

France's response to its experience in the Persian Gulf War also shows both change and continuity. On one hand, the war taught France a number of lessons about the inadequacies of its military forces for intervention abroad: France's means for airlift and sealift were unable to deploy even its relatively small and light forces quickly; France's tactical aircraft (Jaguars built in the late 1960s and 1970s) had not been modernized over the years and could therefore not fly in bad weather or at night (and France's carrier-based *Crusaders* built in the 1950s were not flown at all); an excessive reliance on conscripts—who could not be sent to fight abroad—made it impossible for France to deploy more than 12,000 soldiers out of an army of 280,000; and France's limited means for satellite intelligence

rendered France dependent on the United States for vital battlefield information. As a result of these lessons, France has begun to make significant changes in the size, equipment, organization, and command of its armed forces.

On the other hand, the Gulf War confirmed some long-standing French views about statecraft and international relations. If the war reminded the French of their military limits, it did not convince them to abandon their traditional political goals. On the contrary, many French leaders concluded from the Gulf War that France and Europe must be all the more vigilant about building up their own military power and means for force projection as a way to avoid dependence on the United States. France saw that the Americans' possession of a preponderance of power allowed them to play the sort of influential political and diplomatic roles to which France too aspires, for Europe if not for France alone. The defense ministry's priority development of autonomous European satellite capabilities, for example, is openly described in France as necessary if the European Community is to be able to play an influential global role without having to follow Washington's lead. Much like the Suez crisis of 1956, the Persian Gulf War may lead France to pursue more vigorously its objectives of international status and influence rather than to give them up.

Although it is difficult to predict future French security policy given the centralization of French decisionmaking in the Elysée, major changes seem rather unlikely in the short term. The government of Pierre Bérégovoy has little time to prepare for the critical legislative elections scheduled for spring 1993, and with a full domestic agenda significant changes in French security policy would be surprising. After 1993, however, new developments might become more likely. Most analysts are predicting a victory for the RPR-UDF (Union pour la Démocratie Française) electoral coalition, and RPR skepticism about the European integration process could call into question France's continued emphasis on an "integrated" European defense (despite UDF support for integration). RPR leaders have also expressed interest—as an alternative to a European federation—in a more comprehensive French role in NATO and a better French relationship with the United States. Other domestic political scenarios with a potential impact on French security policy include the possible presidential elections of Jacques Delors (president of the EC Commission) or former prime minister Michel Rocard. Both Delors and Rocard would be likely to continue to pursue European security integration, but—compared with the present Socialist leaders—might reduce French military spending and deemphasize the French nuclear force.

The U.S. security relationship with France is important. France is one of the few countries in Western Europe genuinely willing to devote resources to an active international security role and might be useful in helping to ensure western interests as Washington is forced to cut back its own international military presence. American concerns about a European security identity that would exclude the United States are legitimate, and France and the United States should continue to work hard to find a way to allow Europe to develop its own defense structures and means that does not marginalize the United States. It would be unfortunate if in the area of international security—by no means a zero-sum game—the United States and France were not to become full and trusting partners.

There are steps both sides can take to avoid such an outcome. The United States should not oppose attempts to create a European security and defense identity (which would at worst be irrelevant because it would be ineffectual, and which would at best strengthen Atlantic security while reducing American burdens), and should do more (by genuinely supporting other institutions) to show France that the rejuvenation of NATO is not meant to overshadow everything else. American policymakers should resist the temptation to isolate France by pressuring their “Atlantic” allies in Europe and they should attempt to show France that U.S. aims in Europe are security, stability, and partnership rather than hegemony or political control. France, on the other hand, must make it clear to the United States that it seeks a European entity that would work closely and transparently with the United States and that it fully welcomes an important security role for the Americans in Europe. The United States will not accept a security role in Europe if that role is simply to back up the Europeans when called upon to do so. If both sides go out of their way to reassure the other, there seems no objective reason that fruitful transatlantic arrangements cannot be created.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Over the past several years, a number of factors have converged to challenge some of the long-standing assumptions of French security policy. The end of the Cold War, the appearance of a united and fully sovereign Germany, the revelation of the French military's operational deficiencies during the Persian Gulf War, acute pressures on the French defense budget, and growing domestic political and social problems have all come together to put into question the continuities that have marked French defense since the early 1960s. Not surprisingly, analysts in both France and the United States have already begun to discern initial elements of change and to predict more to come.

This report seeks to identify the various pressures on the famous French "defense consensus" and to ask how France has been adapting to those pressures so far. Based on extensive interviews with French officials and analysts over the past 12 months, the report places evolving French security policy into its postwar context and attempts to determine the extent to which traditional French thinking about European security has changed, and to identify those areas in which it has not changed.

Understanding contemporary French views about security is important for Americans. The construction of a new security order in Europe and around the world is dependent on the convergence of—or at least compromise between—the many national positions involved, and no completely satisfactory arrangements can be reached in the absence of French-American cooperation. France and the United States have often been at odds in the recent European security debate and there is no guarantee that a better understanding of French perspectives will eliminate these disagreements; French and American interests are not always identical and neither Paris nor Washington is likely to be passive where its perceived interests are concerned. Still, some of the recent disagreements between France and the United States are due to mutual suspicions and misperceptions that a clearer understanding of French views and concerns can perhaps help to dispel.

The remainder of this report is divided into four parts. Section 2 reviews the main elements of French security policy since the early 1960s and examines the geopolitical, diplomatic, and fiscal pressures that many believe will force France to modify its long-standing approach. Section 3 analyzes French policy over the past two years in

three key dimensions: the Atlantic Alliance, the European security identity, and France's global military role in the wake of the Persian Gulf War. Section 4 assesses the prospects for near-term change in French security policy and analyzes three of the most plausible scenarios that could follow the legislative elections scheduled for 1993. Section 5 concludes by examining the implications of French policy for French-American relations and offering some recommendations for U.S. policy toward France.

2. THE GAULLIST CONSENSUS AND FORCES OF CHANGE

Charles de Gaulle returned to power in 1958 with the goal of restoring France's stature and influence in the world. Convinced that France—"subordinate" to the United States within NATO and lacking in determined national leadership—was not fulfilling its due role under his predecessors, de Gaulle established a new regime based on a strong presidency and took control of foreign and security policy in his own hands. As the leader of the Fifth Republic, de Gaulle devised and implemented a set of policies based on five well-known elements: opposition to exclusive American leadership of the Western Alliance, a primary reliance upon nuclear weapons and a strategy of "proportional deterrence," presidential control of defense and foreign policy (despite the fact that such control is not clearly stipulated in the constitution), a priority on the relationship with the Federal Republic of Germany, and the definition of a special status for France with respect to NATO's integrated military structure. All of these principles were implemented in a flexible manner, and de Gaulle understood France's fundamental interest in maintaining the Atlantic Alliance and the American presence in Europe. But with French security not directly threatened, and with the restoration of French self-confidence and influence his most important goals, de Gaulle was able continually to subordinate France's participation in Western military structures to his desire that it exercise as much national independence as possible. France under de Gaulle was certainly an ally, but a "reluctant" one with a mind and objectives of its own.¹

Though highly controversial at first and opposed by most of the country's political leaders, Gaullist principles for French security policy eventually became the foundation for a defense "consensus" unmatched anywhere else in Europe. While many West European populations were experiencing divisive "defense debates," the French remained loyal to a set of policies that by the end of the 1970s seemed acceptable across the entire political spectrum. Indeed, de Gaulle's general pursuit of French independence, influence, and stature—and his more specific policies of nuclear deterrence, national command authority, and non-integration—were followed to a remarkable degree

¹On the basic pillars of the "Gaullist model," see Michael Harrison, *The Reluctant Ally: France and Atlantic Security*, the Johns Hopkins University Press, Baltimore and London, 1981.

by all of his successors. Not only the "Gaullist" Georges Pompidou, but also the Centrist Valéry Giscard d'Estaing and the Socialist François Mitterrand chose—or were obliged by political circumstances—to implement security policies well within Gaullist parameters.

None of this is to say that French policy has been frozen in place for three decades. Beginning in the mid-1970s—in the face of mounting Soviet military power, uncertainty about American commitments to Europe, and concern about West Germany's eastern "drift"—France gradually dropped some of the taboos that had prevented it from cooperating more closely with its allies. Especially under Giscard d'Estaing and Mitterrand, France developed more detailed plans for coordinating military operations with NATO in wartime, conducted peacetime field maneuvers and exercises alongside other NATO troops, increased spending on conventional forces, and altered its military doctrine to stress participation in the "forward battle" for Germany. Nonetheless, as the 1980s came to an end, French leaders still proclaimed France's need for autonomy in the defense field, still emphasized the primacy of the *force de frappe* in their security policies and military spending, and still placed great priority on France's international role, influence, and prestige. French security policy has evolved over the past two decades *within* the context of the "Gaullist model," not outside it.²

This legacy of great continuity underlines the extent to which far-reaching change in France would be a break with well-established patterns. After thirty resilient years, why might the Gaullist model finally be beginning to crack? What exactly has changed since the end of 1989 to suggest that NATO's most diffident ally—and Europe's most stubborn defender of national military sovereignty—might finally be forced to give up some of the main components of its "independent" defense? What are the various forces of change that are pushing the French to adapt and how seriously should they be taken? Since 1989, four different sets of factors have emerged that challenge the main assumptions underlying the Gaullist consensus and suggest the possible need for significant policy change.

The first and most important shock to France was the collapse of Soviet power in Eastern Europe and the end of the continent's military and political division. More than most of their neighbors, the

²On the continuities of French security policy since de Gaulle, see Philip H. Gordon, *A Certain Idea of France: French Security Policy and the Gaullist Legacy*, Princeton University Press, Princeton, New Jersey, forthcoming.

French have always associated their national stature and prestige with the possession of military power, and particularly with the possession of an independent nuclear force. This status as the world's "third military power" (in the words of successive French presidents) was supposed to make France the political leader of Western Europe, earn respect and attention from the two superpowers, and perhaps more important, endow France with an advantage over its German neighbor and compensate for German economic strength. The disappearance of the "Soviet threat," however, by undermining the value and legitimacy of military power, has raised difficult questions about the country's military and nuclear priorities. Without a military threat to speak of, and with the Germans no longer preoccupied with defense, what good is a big army, and what is the purpose of the *force de frappe*? A strategic nuclear arsenal may have been a source of pride, prestige, and security when Europe was divided and threatened by a hostile Warsaw Pact, but what good is it in a world in which security threats are more likely to be ethnic and border disputes than massive invasions of the homeland? A French public preoccupied with unemployment, immigration, and economic competitiveness has begun to question the value of military "prestige" and to wonder if Paris would not be wise to devote more resources to education and economics, and less to defense.

A second and related challenge to traditional French security policy was German unification. When on October 3, 1990, the Federal Republic was transformed from a semi-sovereign, militarily dependent "equal" of France into a more politically confident state of 80 million inhabitants, the delicate balance within the European Community was thrown off. Not only did German unification decrease the relative size and wealth of France in Europe but it also had implications for France's cherished "independence." France could now hardly expect the Germans to accept the constraints of European integration—such as the devolution of control over the strong German currency to a European central bank—if it was unwilling to do the same in the political, and by extension, military field. In the past, of course, France had always managed to impose certain constraints on Germany that did not apply to France, but the new situation was different: with a united Germany no longer in need of externally borrowed political legitimization and much less dependent on others for its security, France would now surely have to abandon much of its own independence if it wanted Germany to do the same.

The combination of these first two challenges, the end of the Cold War and German unification, raised the possibility that France's long-standing geopolitical orientation—special status in the Atlantic

Alliance combined with the pursuit of détente in the East and an independent defense—might have to be reconsidered and new geopolitical options explored. At least three such options were available. First, expecting an American withdrawal from Europe and fearful of the power of a united Germany, France could seek a new “special relationship” with Russia, reviving an approach tried in the 1890s and 1930s to 1940s as a means of counterbalancing France’s “hereditary enemy” across the Rhine. This would not mean an end to the close Franco-German partnership, but would serve as a source of equilibrium by improving French relations with the continent’s other major power. Alternatively, concerned about sharing a continent with a powerful Germany and an unstable Russia, France could end its traditional diffidence toward American leadership and seek the renovation of NATO and closer ties with the United States and Great Britain. Like the “Russian card,” an Atlantic option had historical precedents, and the emerging possibility of an American withdrawal from Europe increased its appeal to some in France. Finally, unsure about both the probity and efficacy of what would seem an anti-German alliance with Russia, and unwilling to tie its fate to the undependable “Anglo-Saxons,” France could pursue a third geopolitical alternative: the development of a true “European union” that would bind Germany tightly to France as part of a West European federation. In the immediate wake of the 1989 European revolutions, it was not clear which of these geopolitical alternatives would appeal most to the French, but it was clear that the approach of the Cold War years—in which France pursued an “independent,” nuclear-based defense behind a huge American-led army in Germany—was no longer a viable option.

A third major impetus to change in French security policy was the Persian Gulf War. The war starkly revealed many of France’s operational military deficiencies and the limits to its supposed independence, showed that “Europe” in its present form was incapable of taking external or military action abroad, and demonstrated the great advantages—indeed, the necessity—of military cooperation with the United States. As a result, it suggested that France’s concept of national military independence was bankrupt, and underlined the need for closer military integration within Europe and with the United States. At the beginning of the Gulf crisis, French leaders affirmed their famous *différence* and insisted on France’s independent political voice. But France’s wartime solidarity with the United States was clear, and it suggested that closer French-American cooperation was in fact starting to come about. The Gulf War also carried with it many “lessons” for France about its primary reliance on conscript

forces, its relative emphasis on nuclear weapons, its lack of adequate satellite intelligence capabilities, and its insufficient means for force projection abroad.

The final set of factors pushing for change in French security policy is one of the most powerful of all: the French defense budget is under great strain and no longer seems adequate to fund the military programs that result from French ambitions. With numerous major programs to enter into their most expensive phases during the 1990s, foreign arms sales down from their mid-1980s peak, new priorities like satellites and strategic lift, compelling political claims for spending on education and social welfare, and the country emerging from a mild but real recession, it is unlikely that the French will be able to avoid major changes in recent plans for defense procurement.

An overstretched defense budget, of course, is an old phenomenon in France, and seasoned followers of French military affairs have seen many "decisive years" come and go. Ever since the mid-1970s, when spending on conventional forces was increased without lowering commitments to nuclear forces, a consistent pattern has developed in which an ambitious set of programs is authorized by the five-year *loi de programmation*, but then not fully funded by annual defense budgets. As a result, new governments are periodically required to "skip a year" before passing their own *loi de programmation*, which, in turn, does not include provisions for adequate funding. Moreover, when defense budget cuts are necessary, major programs are almost never abandoned. Instead, programs are stretched out over time and fewer units are ordered, leading to the necessary savings in the short run but also to smaller economies of scale and increased per-unit costs. In short, the difficult choices are hardly ever made, and the constraints have only become worse over the years.³

The present situation seems particularly acute, and major choices can arguably no longer be put off. The new program law to be debated in parliament in the fall of 1992 is supposed to lay out a spending schedule for, to mention only some of the biggest programs, a series of new-generation Triomphant-class submarines (estimated cost:

³In the spring of 1989, for example, when Mitterrand decided to cut FF45 bn (45 billion French francs) from the defense budget, he failed to cancel any major programs and instead simply stretched out purchases over time or limited the numbers of units bought. See Erik Jones, *French Defense Since Cohabitation: Consensus and Military Planning for 1990-1993*, Topical Papers No. 2, Université Libre de Bruxelles, July 1989 pp. 11-14. For background and a discussion of recent French military budget dilemmas, see General Maurice Faivre, "Trente ans de programmation militaire," *Le Casoar*, July 1991; and François Heisbourg, "Défense française: La quadrature du cercle," *Politique internationale*, No. 53, Fall 1991, pp. 257-274.

FFr127 bn); a new-generation submarine-launched nuclear missile (the M-5, FFr71 bn); a modified version of the M-5 missile to be deployed in land-based silos; an air-launched stand-off missile (the ASLP, FFr23 bn); a second Charles de Gaulle-class nuclear-powered aircraft carrier (FFr24 bn not including accompanying aircraft and escorts); the Leclerc tank (FFr58 bn); the Rafale fighter (FFr189 bn); the Mirage 2000 (FFr114 bn); and surveillance and communications satellites Hélios (FFr5 bn) and Syracuse II (FFr14 bn).⁴ With French Gross Domestic Product (GDP) growth down to just over 2 percent per year, and with the defense share of GDP limited by fiscal constraints to less than 3.3 percent (its lowest level since 1974), the cancellation of at least one major program may be unavoidable.

Many of the familiar elements of French security policy can thus no longer be taken for granted. The end of the Cold War, the challenge to the legitimacy of military and nuclear power, German unification, the lessons of the Persian Gulf War, and acute fiscal difficulties all make it more difficult than ever for the French to continue along the present course. It is legitimate to wonder whether the continuities that have marked French security policy for so long can last.

⁴Estimates as of 1991 from the Commission des Finances de l'Assemblée Nationale and from discussions at the French Ministry of Defense. Exact numbers of units of each program to be ordered and updated cost estimates will not be known until the passage of a new military program law, now scheduled for fall 1992.

3. CONTINUITY AND CHANGE IN RECENT FRENCH SECURITY POLICY

A review of French security policy since 1989 provides evidence of both change and continuity. On one hand, recent French decisions have called into question the long-standing nuclear priority in French defense, some French initiatives in Europe suggest a willingness to abandon the goal of national military independence, and there are signs beneath the surface that at least some French leaders would like to seek a more comprehensive military relationship with NATO and closer cooperation with the United States. On the other hand, however, traditional French goals of stature, influence, and autonomy seem as strong as ever, French reticence about American leadership and the primacy of NATO still seems acute, and France remains committed to preserving and maximizing its own national freedom of maneuver. The result is an uncertain and sometimes inconsistent security policy and a "domestic consensus" under greater strain than at any time since the mid-1970s. A look at evolving French policies on the Atlantic, European, and global levels suggests that while some particular French policies are changing under the fiscal and geopolitical pressures described above, the underlying objectives of those policies have remained very much intact.

FRANCE AND NATO AFTER THE COLD WAR

The period between the collapse of the Berlin Wall (November 1989) and the end of the Persian Gulf War (February 1991) offered a window of opportunity during which France might have reduced its opposition to NATO integration and sought better military relations with the United States. French leaders could plausibly have argued that the European security situation had changed dramatically since the 1960s, that Gaullist reticence toward a "hegemonic" United States was no longer necessary in the wake of the announced U.S. troop reductions, and that a new French attitude toward NATO had become both possible and necessary. With the dominant American role in Europe greatly reduced and as a means to balance the new German power, France could have cast its lot with the proponents of a "New Atlanticism" and sought to join its allies in a new transatlantic consensus.

A significant French rapprochement with the United States in NATO, however, has not taken place. Whether because NATO was unwilling

to take sufficient account of French proposals for a genuine "Europeanization" of the Alliance (as some French officials argue), or because the French in fact prefer a status quo in which they maintain a particular role (as many Americans believe), France decided not to take part in a number of aspects of NATO's reforms. Hopes that may have been entertained that France would become a more cooperative Atlantic ally now seem to have been quite mistaken.¹

The French, of course, have continued to maintain that they seek the preservation of a strong and functional NATO, and French leaders from both government and opposition have all reaffirmed France's desire to work closely with NATO and the United States. In response to American and some other complaints that France is trying to set up redundant, competing security structures, the French insist they seek arrangements that will complement NATO, not replace it. As President Mitterrand put it at an important conference at the Ecole Supérieure de Guerre in April 1991:

The defense of Western Europe, for the present and for many years to come, can only be conceived of in a context of respect for the Atlantic Alliance. It is not a matter of creating a defense organization that will substitute for that of NATO. It is a matter of understanding the limits of the Atlantic Alliance and its military organization. [. . .] The Atlantic Alliance will continue fully to play its major role in the maintenance of peace. [. . .] [F]or a man of my generation, it is necessary to express the gratitude that is owed to the great American nation without which our liberty and our homeland would have lost all significance.²

Other French officials have also claimed that France sees NATO and the United States as necessary to any new security arrangements for Europe. Defense Minister Pierre Joxe calls the Atlantic Alliance "the defense system upon which European security is based," Elysée spokesman Hubert Védrine insists that "no one is trying to construct a system in competition with the one that exists," and even former defense minister Jean-Pierre Chevènement—a longtime critic of

¹For an interesting discussion of the (ultimately unsuccessful) French and American efforts to agree on NATO during the spring of 1990, see Frank Costigliola, *France and the United States: The Cold Alliance since World War II*, Twayne Publishers, New York, 1992, pp. 228–230.

²See the text of Mitterrand's April 11, 1991 closing speech at the Forum de l'Ecole Supérieure de Guerre, in Ministère de la Défense, *Propos sur la défense*, No. 20, March–April 1991, pp. 82–90. At NATO's November 1991 Rome summit, the president reiterated his view that "the Alliance remains a necessary instrument and the Washington Treaty a fundamental guarantee for our future." See Claire Tréan, "L'OTAN souhaite engager le dialogue avec les pays de l'Europe de l'Est," *Le Monde*, November 9, 1991, p. 6.

American "imperialism" and an impassioned defender of France's special national role—has argued that the American commitment to European security "remains indispensable."³ French officials throughout the bureaucracy—in the Foreign Ministry, the Defense Ministry, and the Elysée—all claim a solid commitment to the maintenance of NATO and U.S. troops in Europe, and firmly deny suggestions that they want the Americans out. Rather than a debate about the existence of the Alliance, the French debate is about NATO's organization, content, and scope.

Contemporary French critiques of NATO fall into three main, and largely traditional, categories: the principle of military integration, the political scope of the Alliance, and the geographical scope of the Alliance. It is not necessary here to review the history of these well-known French positions, but it is important to understand that the past few years have not caused them to disappear.

Military Integration

To the great disappointment of those hoping to see France take advantage of the new European context to rejoin NATO military commands, the French did not take part in the July 1990 NATO summit decision to "rely increasingly on multinational corps."⁴ Instead, both Defense Minister Chevènement and President Mitterrand declared (in the latter's words) that France had "no intention of changing [its] particular position with regard to NATO's integrated command."⁵ More recently, French leaders have continued to make it clear that there could be "no question of rejoining covertly or more overtly NATO's military organizations" and that "France's relationship with

³For Joxe, see his November 13, 1991 speech to the National Assembly during presentation of the 1992 defense budget, "Compte-Rendu des Débats Parlementaires sur les crédits 1992 du Ministère de la Défense," text provided by the French Defense Ministry Information Service (SIRPA), p. 29; for Védérine, see "Paris tente de rassurer Washington sur la pérennité de l'alliance atlantique," *Le Monde*, May 29, 1991, p. 4. For Chevènement, see his June 1990 speech to the Royal Institute for Defense Studies in London, in *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 15, May–June 1990, p. 112.

⁴See "London Declaration North Atlantic Council, July 5–6, 1990," U.S. Department of State, Bureau of Public Affairs. Excerpts from the NATO declaration can be found as "This Alliance Must And Will Adapt," *The Washington Post*, July 7, 1990, p. A18.

⁵Chevènement explained that while experiments like the Franco-German joint brigade might be politically valuable, they had practical limitations and could not be "generalized." If such an experiment were to be repeated, it would have to be "in a bilateral form and among Europeans." See David White, "French minister rejects idea of multi-national forces," *Financial Times*, June 8, 1990, p. 5. For Mitterrand, see the text of the post-summit press conference in Ministère de la Défense, *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 16, July–August 1990, p. 14.

NATO has not been modified.”⁶ As will be seen below, France and Germany have begun to set up a joint European military corps that may signal a significant change in France’s opposition to the principle of integration. But whatever the fate of multinational military units exclusively among Europeans, it is clear that France still opposes integration within NATO itself.

Military integration within NATO, of course, has long been a *bête noire* for the French: de Gaulle believed that NATO’s integrated commands, perhaps necessary in 1951, by the 1960s served only to help sustain American political hegemony in Europe. There was always a certain element of cynicism in this position, as France knew it could denounce integration, leave NATO commands, and expel SHAPE (Supreme Headquarters, Allied Powers, Europe) without threatening the integrated NATO forces that would continue to protect France. But de Gaulle argued that cooperating national forces would be just as effective as integrated ones, and that they would be much more responsive to the distinct interests of the nations involved.

The crux of the present French critique of military integration within NATO is that in the context of a greatly diminished Soviet threat, and given the implausibility of a short-warning attack in Europe, integration has lost its only conceivable *raison d’être*. In the future, French leaders argue, threats to security and stability will be much more diverse and unpredictable, requiring more flexible capabilities of response. As the French diplomat in charge of the issue recently put it:

We are no longer in the perspective of the third world war, where we had to prepare for a massive response to a relatively clearly identified massive attack. [. . .] A permanent integrated structure could only be justified in this perspective.⁷

In place of “integration” that might limit national flexibility, French strategists stress “coordination” and “interoperability.” They argue that NATO forces should coordinate bilaterally through national defense staffs, and that the NATO military committee (composed of national chiefs-of-staff) should “resume its preponderant place.”⁸ Not knowing where military crises might arise or which countries will be

⁶Roland Dumas cited in Claire Tréan, “La relation de la France à l’OTAN n’est pas modifiée,” *Le Monde*, March 23, 1991.

⁷Cited in Claire Tréan, “France-OTAN: le chat et la souris,” *Le Monde*, May 4, 1991, p. 3.

⁸An unnamed French official cited in Edward Mortimer, “Europe’s teetering pillar,” *Financial Times*, May 1, 1991, p. 15.

involved in meeting them, the French seek European security structures built on independent elements capable of working together. "What will count," argues analyst Frédéric Bozo, "will not be integration of forces but on the contrary, for each country, the capacity to act together—or not—when the time comes."⁹

Not even the "lessons" of the allied experience in the Persian Gulf, where highly disparate allied units successfully performed complex air-land-sea operations under a unified command, have convinced the French that pre-crisis military integration is necessary. On the contrary, for French military and political leaders, the Gulf War demonstrated that France could fight alongside the Americans as well or better than many of its NATO-integrated allies, and thus confirmed that "ad-hoc" cooperation can be as effective as anything else.¹⁰ Some French officials, including Defense Minister Joxe, have begun to acknowledge more explicitly than in the past that "in action itself . . . operational integration is the condition for success." But these leaders are quick to point out that such "operational integration," based on agreements between national armies and improved interoperability of equipment, must come after independent political choices have been made. For Joxe, "what is important is to maintain control over our own forces, and thus to have them all under a single and national command. [This] is the case [today] and will continue to be the case."¹¹

Since the end of 1991, there has been increasing interest in some French circles—especially at the Ministry of Defense—in a greater French role in NATO's military structures, and Joxe has recently spoken of France "revising its accords with NATO to take account of the profound geostrategic changes that have taken place in Europe."¹²

⁹See Frédéric Bozo, "La France et l'Otan, vers une nouvelle alliance," *Défense nationale*, January 1991, p. 30.

¹⁰Interviews conducted with officials in Paris in May and June 1991 revealed this to be a widespread view in France.

¹¹See Joxe's speech to the National Assembly on June 6, 1991; text provided by SIRPA, pp. 33–34. Joxe's discussion of the notion of "independence" for French forces was in fact very similar to past French doctrine. "Our independence may also be expressed in our disengagement from an affair in which we would [otherwise] be implicated, if we were to judge that the combat in which we would find ourselves would no longer be our own, in its form, in its objective, or in both." See p. 33 of speech cited above.

¹²See Joxe's speech to the Cours Supérieure Interarmées, "Allocution de M. Pierre Joxe, Ministre de la Défense, à la cérémonie de clôture de la session plénière du Cours Supérieure des Armées" (text provided by French Ministry of Defense) and the account in *Le Monde* by Jacques Isnard, "La France accroît sa participation à l'OTAN," December 4, 1991, pp. 1, 10.

Joxe has at no time called for France to rejoin NATO's integrated military commands, but Ministry of Defense officials suggest that he is in favor of increased French participation in NATO military bodies, perhaps including the Military Committee and Nuclear Planning Group, which France has boycotted since 1966. Other French leaders, however, such as Foreign Minister Dumas, have continued to insist that they see no reason for France to "modify [its] relationship with NATO," and, in the foreign minister's words, "thereby enter directly into Atlanticism under American hegemony."¹³ The Elysée—decisive in such matters—has apparently come out on the side of the foreign minister, and there has as yet been no follow-up to the suggestions made by the Ministry of Defense.

French leaders are not oblivious to arguments that NATO's integrated commands help ensure the U.S. presence in Germany and the German presence in NATO (both avowed French goals), and they are as concerned as anyone about the potential (in the absence of integrated commands) for the "renationalization" of European defenses. They are also interested in keeping Germany bound as closely to NATO as possible. But despite the diminishing American troop presence in Europe, the French apparently still assume that any form of formal "integration" with the United States implies American domination, or at least excessive U.S. constraints on French freedom of maneuver. Whereas some French officials now seem to believe that joining NATO's integrated commands would give France more influence over Alliance policy (and would imply little risk because of NATO's declining role), most French leaders remain diffident about a military organization that they have long associated with subordination to the political decisions of Washington. If France's opposition to the *principle* of international military integration disappears, it is much more likely to happen in a European context than in an Atlantic one.

The Political Scope of the Alliance

A second enduring French position in the NATO debate is that NATO's role should remain limited to guarantees of mutual defense.

¹³In his interview with *Libération* given just one day after Joxe's NATO speech, Dumas also reiterated that he saw no reason for France to return "directly or indirectly to NATO's integrated military commands," particularly in the absence of an imminent military threat. See "Roland Dumas contre une Europe des technocrates," *Libération*, December 6, 1991, p. 18.

Whereas some Americans have proposed to revalidate the Alliance by extending its competencies into political and economic domains, the French insist more than ever that NATO remain primarily a security organization designed to preserve geopolitical balance in Europe. French officials argue that giving NATO too many new roles will detract from the Alliance's essential functions, and they see proposals to "politicize" the Alliance simply as American efforts to maintain leverage over a Europe no longer so dependent on the U.S. military umbrella.

In response to U.S. Secretary of State James Baker's December 1989 call for an institutional transatlantic partnership, for example, Foreign Minister Dumas expressed concern about "certain tendencies to see the alliance get involved with everything in all sorts of areas," and called on the allies to "leave to each framework its specificity if we want it to keep its coherence and strength."¹⁴ Jean-Pierre Chevènement argued six months later that it would be "neither desirable nor realistic to go down a path where the reinforcement of the political dimension of the Alliance would mean the retraction of military questions," and that "[NATO] has no vocation [for] tasks such as co-operation in the areas of the environment, economics or culture."¹⁵ President Mitterrand himself, apparently concerned about the withering of NATO before anything else is in place, has been somewhat more ready than his ministers to accept new competencies of the Alliance and has admitted that "we cannot ask the U.S. to stay in Europe as a determining element of our security without keeping them informed of political issues." "But," Mitterrand is quick to add, "we must not think that the military alliance should occupy itself with everything and anything."¹⁶ Holding to these principles, in

¹⁴Dumas at December 14, 1989 meeting in Brussels. See Joseph Fitchett, "Mitterrand Mutes Objections to U.S. Proposals on Europe," *International Herald Tribune*, December 19, 1989.

¹⁵See Chevènement's June 1990 speech in London cited in *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 15, May-June 1990, p. 112.

¹⁶The statement came one week after Mitterrand had been urged by President Bush at the Martinique French-American summit to accept that NATO begin to deal with economic and political issues as well as military ones. See Ian Davidson, "France and Germany align defence positions," *Financial Times*, April 27, 1990. For the full text, see Mitterrand's remarks after the 56th Franco-German summit in *Propos sur la Défense*, No. 14, March-April 1990, p. 64. There is a clear tension between the president's sense that NATO must "adjust its strictly military content" if it is to survive and his desire to keep it from interfering with more "European" fora. See "Un entretien avec M. François Mitterrand," *Le Monde*, June 20, 1990, pp. 1-4.

late 1991 Mitterrand denounced NATO's "preaching" to the Soviet Union about economic reform, and France strongly opposed plans to have NATO coordinate and distribute aid there. French diplomats complained that these were not NATO's proper roles.¹⁷

The French are thus adamant that questions of economics, reform in Eastern Europe, relations with the Middle East, and European politics (immigration, transportation, communication, etc.) are best left to European bodies such as the European Community (EC), the Conference on Security and Cooperation in Europe (CSCE), and Mitterrand's proposed "Confederation," a new organization that would encompass all of Europe but would not include the United States. For the French, NATO is useful, even indispensable, but it should not become the means for the United States to maintain its predominance in Europe or to prevent European institutions from maturing. In short, it might be said that France believes that the Alliance should not be "politicized," but (paradoxically) "militarized." As one French analyst put it, NATO should "come back to its original mission: the eventual defense of its members, to the exclusion of any other political mission."¹⁸

American critics of the minimalist French view argue that what France wants is a NATO in which the United States becomes a sort of "defender of last resort," with no say in any aspects of European policy but which risks being "dragged into another war." In this view, the French desire to limit NATO to its "traditional" roles—guarding against a Russian threat and ensuring nuclear deterrence—would mean depriving it of any realistic role at all. Although the French claim to be motivated by a desire to preserve the Alliance's cohesion by not involving it in nonmilitary questions, many Americans suspect the real French motivation is a desire to reduce U.S. influence in Europe. The French, of course, have a different perception: that the Americans want a NATO that allows Washington to control European

¹⁷At NATO's November 1991 Rome summit, Mitterrand declined to associate himself with a declaration recommending that the Soviet Union embrace economic liberty and adopt a market economy. In the president's words: "We don't have to spawn advice. We are not the governesses or tutors of the countries not in the alliance. We don't have an evangelical mission." See Claire Tréan, "M. Mitterrand a dénoncé le 'prêchi-prêcha' de l'OTAN," *Le Monde*, November 10–11, 1991. For French opposition to NATO's role in aid to the Soviet Union, see Pierre Haski, "L'OTAN vole au secours de l'ennemi d'hier," *Libération*, December 20, 1991, p. 18.

¹⁸See Frédéric Bozo, "La France et l'Otan: vers une nouvelle alliance," *Défense nationale*, January 1991, p. 28. Also see Rassemblement pour la République (RPR) defense expert François Fillon's call for a "return to the spirit of the 1949 treaty," in Fillon, "Entre l'OTAN et l'Europe des chimères," *Le Monde*, April 19, 1991, p. 2.

affairs as if Europe were still an American protectorate. This debate is neither new nor close to being resolved.

The Geographical Scope of the Alliance

Just as France opposes broadening NATO's political scope, it objects to its geographical expansion. Ironically, during the first decade and a half of the Alliance's existence it was France that sought a wider NATO, whereas the United States wanted to limit it to the North Atlantic area. France insisted on including its Algerian departments in the North Atlantic Treaty's article 6, saw its colonial wars of the 1950s as part of an anti-communist contribution to NATO and the West, and repeatedly proposed that the Atlantic Alliance become a forum for the United States, France, and the United Kingdom to discuss and manage international political affairs.¹⁹ By the mid-1960s, however, it was the United States—with responsibilities from Southeast Asia to Latin America to the Middle East—that wanted NATO's support in its activities and conflicts abroad, and France that wanted to limit it to Western Europe.

The present French objection to extending the Alliance's geographical scope is as strong as ever, and French leaders argue that NATO should not "extend its zone of competence and transform itself into a grand directory for world affairs."²⁰ Throughout 1991, Paris opposed increased links between NATO and the new democracies of Eastern Europe and only very reluctantly agreed to the formation of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council (NACC) that was set up between the Alliance and the former Warsaw Pact states.²¹ French officials argue that the NACC's missions are poorly defined, that its creation risks misleading the East Europeans into assuming security guarantees that NATO is not prepared to give, that the exclusion of "neutral" countries is illogical and that the new institution's functions overlap

¹⁹See Harrison, *Reluctant Ally*, chapter one.

²⁰The words of Roland Dumas cited in "M. Dumas prône la cohésion des Douze face à la crise yougoslave," *Le Monde*, October 6–7, 1991, p. 5.

²¹When proposals were first made to develop regular diplomatic links between NATO and Eastern Europe, French officials reacted by calling such logic "bizarre," and Dumas argued that NATO should not take advantage of political changes in order to "extend its military role." See Claire Tréan, "Paris et Washington réduisent leur divergences sur la défense," *Le Monde*, June 8, 1991, p. 8; and Jean de la Guévière, "Le renforcement des compétences de l'OTAN et le rôle des Européens restent controversés," *Le Monde*, December 20, 1990, p. 28. France eventually came around to accept the creation of the NACC, but only reluctantly. See Jean de la Guévière, "La France accueille avec scepticisme le projet de 'Conseil de coopération de l'Atlantique nord,'" *Le Monde*, October 30, 1991.

with those of the CSCE.²² For some French diplomats, the NACC is also a surreptitious German attempt to "CSCE-ize" NATO, which risks leaving Europe with two pan-European security organizations but no fully functioning organization for mutual defense.

France also continues to oppose the notion that NATO might develop capabilities and legal authority for interventions abroad such as the recent one in the Persian Gulf. France has no objection to cooperating with the United States on global security issues, and in private French officials acknowledge that major European interventions abroad without the support of the United States are nearly inconceivable at present.²³ But the French believe that to allow NATO to take the lead in organizing security in the Third World is to short-circuit the growing potential for other, more appropriate bodies, such as the European Community and the UN, to take on those roles. In short, a broadened geographical scope for NATO, like a broadened political scope, would only weaken the existing Alliance guarantees and serve as an excuse to maintain the U.S. leadership of Europe.

The vigorous French opposition to NATO's May 1991 decision to create a Rapid Reaction Corps (RRC) was illustrative of the tenacity of France's position on limiting NATO's scope.²⁴ This new NATO unit, of course, was not to be given an explicitly "out-of-area" role, and it could not be called a formal expansion of NATO's "zone." In the French view, however, creating a highly mobile fighting force in the immediate wake of the Gulf War, with Yugoslavia breaking up, Eastern Europe calling for security guarantees, and a renewed focus on Turkey and the Mediterranean, was clearly a first step in this direction. In the Gulf, after all, "NATO" was not technically involved; but it was clear to everyone that NATO forces, equipment, commanders, and doctrines were being used.

²²Interviews in Paris, April 1992. Also see Dumas' speech to the March 1992 meeting of the North Atlantic Cooperation Council, "Réunion du Conseil de Coopération Nord-Atlantique: Intervention du Ministre d'Etat," *Bulletin d'Information*, March 11, 1992, French Foreign Ministry.

²³Interviews in Paris, June 1991–April 1992.

²⁴The Rapid Reaction Corps, publicized well in advance, was formally decided at the NATO Defense Planning Committee's May 28–29, 1991 meeting in Brussels, and approved at the November 1991 NATO summit in Rome. It will consist of 70,000–100,000 troops (two British divisions and two multinational ones) with a headquarters in Germany and under British command. It will also include a much smaller (approximately 5000-man) mobile "immediate reaction force." See *Le Monde*, May 29, 1991, p. 4; and David White, "Smaller, faster, cheaper," *Financial Times*, June 1–2, 1991, p. 7.

From a French perspective, NATO's creation of the RRC was a surreptitious attempt to appropriate new roles and missions by first creating the forces that would deal with them. By acting before the Alliance strategy review was completed, NATO was, in Roland Dumas' words, "putting the cart before the horse."²⁵ And as Defense Minister Joxe argued:

It must be noted that these recommendations [to create the RRC] have been adopted even though the discussions about NATO's new strategy, upon which these forces depend, have not reached a conclusion. This doubtless poses a methodological problem in the sense that the organization of forces should result from the strategy and not the opposite.²⁶

Even more important, France saw the creation of the RRC as a blatant attempt to preempt the development of a more autonomous European security structure, and instead to bring European forces under the aegis of the United States, the United Kingdom, and NATO. French officials were apparently "livid" about what they saw as an "Anglo-Saxon" move to act within NATO before Europe had a chance to develop its own proposals.²⁷ According to one French observer, the objective of NATO's haste—the Defense Planning Committee meeting was moved forward from a later date—was "to reduce the European identity to a European pillar in an Atlantic Alliance under American control."²⁸ French leaders have stated that they are prepared to define conditions for French cooperation with the Rapid Reaction Corps, but they have no intention whatever of joining it.²⁹

²⁵Cited in William Drozdiak, "U.S. Shows Arrogance to Allies, French Say," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 1991.

²⁶See Joxe's declaration to the Western European Union (WEU) parliamentary assembly on June 4–5, 1991 in "MM. Dumas et Joxe critiquent la réforme de l'OTAN," *Le Monde*, June 6, 1991. On the same occasion, Dumas agreed with his colleague: "Logic would have it that one defines first the political objectives and then the strategy before deciding on the structure of the forces. NATO has chosen the opposite path."

²⁷See Joseph Fitchett, "France Is Miffed at NATO Plan for Rapid Force," *International Herald Tribune*, June 5, 1991. Also see Dumas' comment that Americans "should not dictate to Europeans what they should do for their own security" in William Drozdiak, "U.S. Shows Arrogance To Allies, French Say," *The Washington Post*, June 12, 1991.

²⁸See André Dumoulin, "Les forces multinationales," *Défense nationale*, August–September 1991, p. 69.

²⁹In Pierre Joxe's words, "We have no intention of joining the rapid reaction force. [...] But we can perfectly envisage defining conditions for French cooperation with this force, and with NATO's other main forces in central Europe, along the lines of other such agreements with NATO in the past." See Robert Mauthner, "Baker backs stronger EC defense role," *Financial Times*, June 7, 1991, p. 2.

The formal debate over NATO's "out-of-area" role was largely resolved at the Alliance's November 1991 Rome summit, which not only reaffirmed that NATO's "zone" was limited to that defined in the Washington Treaty, but also formally recognized the possibility of an exclusively European force, which itself could presumably operate abroad. Still, there remains a certain tension between the American view that the Atlantic Alliance should be adapted to the new era by including the broadest range of international security questions, and the French insistence that NATO remain devoted exclusively to (West) European defense.

France's NATO Policy since 1989

France's NATO policy since 1989 thus shows little break with long-standing French positions. Ironically, France, long the Alliance's most revisionist member, has become its most conservative force, and France has resisted many of the revisions and adaptations other countries have proposed to bring the Alliance up-to-date. French leaders still oppose what they believe to be a dominating American role in the Alliance and they do not find American promises to devolve responsibilities to Europeans to have been fulfilled or even sincerely attempted. In short, neither the fear of a united Germany nor the "lessons" of the Persian Gulf War have led France to embrace NATO as the primary instrument for European security; French objectives and perspectives are still such that they are unwilling to follow the American lead.

FRANCE AND THE EUROPEAN SECURITY IDENTITY

As an alternative to an American-dominated NATO, the French have been the most vocal supporters of a "European security identity" within the framework of the European Community. In the French view, this European identity would initially be formed around the Western European Union—now nine of the twelve EC members—but would eventually "fuse" with the EC itself into a complete "political union," perhaps in 1998 when the WEU's original 50-year statute runs out. The new union would remain intergovernmental where defense policy was concerned, but would form a tightly knit and well-organized group of states capable of, and used to, cooperating closely in military affairs. It would also cooperate closely on security matters with the United States, but would not be subordinate to it.

Since the spring of 1990 France has put forth, most often together with Germany, a series of broad proposals for creating such a new en-

tity.³⁰ The proposals describe a process by which Europe would develop a "true security policy that would ultimately lead to a common defense."³¹ The French and the Germans have portrayed the WEU as a sort of "military arm" of the European Community, one that would "enable the WEU, with a view to being part of Political Union in course, to progressively develop the European common security policy on behalf of the Union."³² Thus, whereas some of France's European partners (in particular Great Britain and the Netherlands) have argued that the WEU should simply be a "bridge" between the European Community and NATO, France and Germany have emphasized its direct links with the EC. In the months preceding the EC's Maastricht summit on political and economic union of December 1991, competing proposals on security policy were submitted by Britain and Italy on one hand and by France and Germany on the other, with the former emphasizing NATO's primacy and the latter European autonomy.³³

At Maastricht, summit leaders adopted important elements of both designs in a compromise position. They agreed that the Community's common foreign and security policy would include "the eventual framing of a common defense policy . . . which might in time lead to a common defense," that the WEU would be "an integral part of the development of the European Union," and that the Union would be able to call on the WEU "to elaborate and implement decisions and actions

³⁰The four most important Franco-German proposals have been the Kohl-Mitterrand statement on political union of April 19, 1990; the Kohl-Mitterrand letter to the Rome intergovernmental conference of December 6, 1990; the Dumas-Genscher letter on security policy cooperation of February 4, 1991; and the Kohl-Mitterrand letter of October 14, 1991 to the Dutch EC presidency calling for a European corps. See "Text of Statement by Mitterrand and Kohl on EC Union," Reuter Press Agency, Transcript, April 19, 1990; "Letter sent by German Chancellor Kohl and French President Mitterrand to the EC Chairman," *FBIS-WEU-90-238*, December 1, 1990, p. 1; "Security Policy Cooperation Within the Framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Political Union," February 4, 1991, *Europe Documents*, February 21, 1991, p. 2; and the text of the October 1991 initiative in *Le Monde*, October 17, 1991, p. 4.

³¹See the text of the December 6, 1990 Kohl-Mitterrand letter to the acting Italian presidency of the European Community printed as "La lettre commune de MM. Kohl et Mitterrand," *Le Monde*, December 9-10, 1990.

³²See the February 4, 1991 letter, "Security Policy Cooperation Within the Framework of the Common Foreign and Security Policy of the Political Union," *Europe Documents*, February 21, 1991, p. 1.

³³See the British-Italian initiative of October 4, 1991; text furnished by British Embassy, Washington, D.C. The British view was clearly expressed by Foreign Secretary Douglas Hurd: "An approach which emphasized the separateness of Europe would seriously weaken our real security. [. . .] The common foreign and security policy should include some broad security issues . . . but it should not compete with the military tasks in NATO." See Douglas Hurd, "No European defence identity without NATO," *Financial Times*, April 15, 1991, p. 13.

of the Union which have defense implications."³⁴ In other words, two key French priorities were accepted: that the European Community would for the first time begin to deal with military-security issues and that the WEU would be directly linked to the EC. At the same time, however, France accepted a relatively weak commitment to a common European defense (the text said only that this "might in time" come about) and France yielded to British sensitivities that EC defense plans should not imply a diminished European interest in NATO. In a separate declaration on December 10, leaders of WEU member-states also pledged that the WEU would act "in conformity with the positions adopted in the Atlantic Alliance" and that they would "intensify" their coordination on Alliance issues, synchronize dates and venues of WEU and NATO meetings, and establish close cooperation between WEU and NATO Secretariats-General.³⁵

Whereas the general themes of European political union and a stronger WEU were thus formally accepted at Maastricht, a number of important differences continue to separate France from some of its European partners. Great Britain, the Netherlands, Denmark, and Portugal, for example, still believe European efforts should remain under the NATO umbrella, and they are unenthusiastic about the European Union's role in defense. These countries are concerned that European defense efforts will "duplicate" those of NATO and that European attempts to gain military autonomy will send a message to the United States that it is no longer needed in European affairs. They worry that new WEU command arrangements will confuse those already in place under NATO's integrated commands, and argue that it will be excessively costly for Europe to attempt to do alone what it presently does together with the United States. For some of the smaller countries in particular, there is also a concern that an EC security structure would be dominated by a Franco-German "axis": countries like the Netherlands, Portugal, and Italy would prefer to entrust their security to the distant, powerful and more disinterested United States than to France and Germany.³⁶ The debate between

³⁴See the "Treaty on Political Union, Final draft by the Dutch Presidency as modified by the Maastricht summit," *Europe Documents*, No. 1750/1751, December 13, 1991, p. 19.

³⁵See the "Declaration of the Member States of Western European Union which are also members of the European Union on the role of WEU and its relations with the European Union and with the Atlantic Alliance," December 10, 1991, text furnished by WEU Secretariat-General.

³⁶See, for example, the concerns expressed by Dutch Foreign Minister Hans van den Broek in "L'Europe ne doit pas être soumise au consensus franco-allemand," *Le Monde*, October 18, 1991; and "Les Pays-Bas se disent 'outrés' par les méthodes de MM. Dumas et Genscher," *Le Monde*, October 9, 1991.

proponents of an "Atlantic Europe" and a "European Europe" is an old one, and recalls the acrimonious struggles of the early 1960s between Paul-Henri Spaak, Joseph Luns, and Harold Macmillan on the one hand, and de Gaulle (and sometimes Konrad Adenauer) on the other. If the participants in the debate have changed, however, the basic arguments remain very much the same. The Maastricht agreement paped over these historic differences, but it did not resolve them.

The most important of the Franco-German initiatives so far—and the one that most specifically raises the concerns about European "duplication" of NATO discussed above—was the proposed text for the European political union treaty put forth by President Mitterrand and Chancellor Kohl on October 14, 1991.³⁷ The main points of the text were closely in line with past initiatives by the two countries, and emphasized the "organic" links that they believed should exist between the Western European Union and the European Community. Potentially most important, however, was a simultaneous proposal, reportedly conceived of by the Elysée and the German chancellery without substantial input from their respective defense and foreign ministries, to expand the Franco-German joint brigade into a functioning European corps that other WEU member-states would be invited to join.³⁸ This was the first public suggestion that the previously vague "European security identity" could have significant forces under its own command.

Details about the proposed European corps are still being elaborated and numerous questions remain about its eventual size, organization, missions, and links with the United States and NATO. The first indications are that the corps will include 35,000 troops (including two German mechanized brigades, the first French armored division, and the 4200-man Franco-German brigade) under alternating French and German commands and with a headquarters in Strasbourg, France. The corps will have three possible types of missions: (1) the defense of Western Europe in the context of the NATO and WEU treaties; (2) peacekeeping and peacemaking (either in Eastern Europe or outside of Europe); and (3) humanitarian tasks.³⁹ Since the Mitterrand-

³⁷See the text of the Kohl-Mitterrand proposal in "MM. Mitterrand et Kohl proposent de renforcer les responsabilités européennes en matière de défense," *Le Monde*, October 17, 1991, pp. 1, 4-5.

³⁸See David Buchan, "Europeans called to join ranks," *Financial Times*, October 17, 1991, p. 2; and Quentin Peel and Ian Davidson, "Political changes first, says Bonn," *Financial Times*, October 17, 1991, p. 2.

³⁹See the "Press Release on the Summit of the Franco-German Defense and Security Council on May 22, 1992 in La Rochelle," text provided by French Embassy, Washington, D.C.

Kohl announcement, Spain, Belgium, and Luxembourg have showed interest in participating in the corps, and a number of mid-level meetings among these countries have taken place.⁴⁰ France and Germany continue to invite other EC member-states to participate in the project and insist that it is a "European"—and not simply "Franco-German"—corps. But this most recent Paris-Bonn initiative is also a sign that the two largest West European countries are frustrated with the inability of the twelve (in the EC) or of the nine (in the WEU) to reach a consensus, especially on the divisive subjects of security and defense. As has happened so often in the past, France and Germany have decided to move forward bilaterally, hoping to draw their partners in their wake.⁴¹

One of the thornier issues to be worked out concerns the links between the European corps, the national forces, and NATO, because all German troops are in NATO's integrated military command whereas French troops are not. French officials do not oppose the idea of the European corps acting as part of NATO, but they attach several important conditions or qualifications to their acceptance of an eventual NATO role. First, if the corps is to fall under NATO command, it should do so as a unit, not as separate French and German units (although French officials accept that neither France nor Germany should be able to prevent the other from acting within NATO). Second, the relationship between the corps and NATO should not be based on permanent peacetime integration but rather "operational control," a concept allowing for military units to be placed under foreign command for a specific and predetermined mission and time. This is the concept that has guided France's own military cooperation with NATO since the French withdrawal, and French officials thus

⁴⁰See "L'Espagne a exprimé son intention de s'associer au corps militaire franco-allemand," *Le Monde*, November 9, 1991, p. 6; and "La Belgique décidera dans quelques semaines de sa participation au corps franco-allemand," *Le Monde*, May 14, 1992, p. 6.

⁴¹This French and German decision to act independently of their neighbors—and particularly of Great Britain—has considerable historical precedent. The European Coal and Steel Community (1951), the European Economic Community (1958), the Franco-German Elysée Treaty (1963), and the European Monetary System (1979) were all cases in which France and Germany took the lead in setting up cooperative European institutions from which Great Britain and some other European countries abstained, often only to apply for membership later once the institutions were already in place. The Franco-German strategy today seems to be based on a hope that the logic of the European military corps will prove just as compelling as these previous initiatives and that the other Europeans will join the corps once it has been set up. Not surprisingly, some EC member-states resent an approach that effectively presents them with a *fait accompli*. See, for example, the complaints of Italian Defense Minister Virginio Rognoni in "Bonn a défendu le projet de corps franco-allemand," *Le Monde*, May 28, 1992, p. 4.

speak of developing agreements between the corps and NATO on the model of the Ailleret-Lemnitzer accords of 1967.⁴² Finally, France insists that all the forces in the European corps (including the German forces "integrated" with NATO) should be loyal first to the corps itself, and only secondarily to NATO if the corps' political leaders should so decide. Thus, whereas German leaders continue to affirm that the corps will bring France closer to NATO's integrated structures, the French conception would in effect bring some German troops under a very similar status to non-integrated France. The official presentation of the corps at the Franco-German summit of May 21-22, 1992 did not fully resolve the question of the corps' relationship with NATO, and important differences in French and German perspectives remain. It is worth noting, however, that both France and Germany accepted the fundamental principle that the European corps would "serve to provide the European Union with the possibility of conducting its own military affairs."⁴³

The Mitterrand-Kohl proposal is important not only for what it might mean for NATO or the European Union, but because it is the most concrete sign yet that France—Europe's most stalwart defender of national military sovereignty—may finally be willing to bring its national security policy into line with its pro-European rhetoric. It will no doubt be some time before any new European corps is actually created—the much smaller Franco-German brigade, after all, took six years from proposal to actual formation—and French Defense Ministry officials describe it more as a modest and pragmatic effort at cooperation than as the foundation of a new European army. Critics of the proposal point out, moreover, that German troops are legally, or at least politically, prohibited from acting in the most likely circumstances in which the corps would be used (Yugoslavia or Eastern Europe, for example) and that while all German forces are theoretic-

⁴²Following the French withdrawal from NATO's integrated commands in 1966, the conditions and modalities of French military cooperation with NATO were established in official agreements between French Armed Forces Chief of Staff Charles Ailleret and NATO SACEUR (Supreme Allied Commander, Europe) Lyman Lemnitzer. These accords were followed and expanded by several others throughout the 1970s, including the Valentin-Ferber accords of 1974.

⁴³See French Embassy, "Press Release on the Summit of the Franco-German Defense and Security Council," p. 1. For more on the European corps and its relationship with NATO, see Jacques Isnard, "La France et l'Allemagne vont créer un corps d'armée à vocation européenne," *Le Monde*, May 21, 1992, pp. 1, 3; and Henri de Bresson and Claire Tréan, "Paris et Bonn protestent de leur fidélité à l'OTAN," *Le Monde*, May 22, 1992, pp. 1, 6.

cally subordinate to SACEUR in peacetime, French forces are not.⁴⁴ Still, the European corps initiative is a clear indication of France's commitment to a new European security entity. It reverses France's July 1990 decision to withdraw its forces from Germany and establishes a new basis for that deployment, accepts for the first time since the late 1950s the "logic" of peacetime military integration, and provides for—through the joint headquarters to be established in Strasbourg—the first permanent peacetime stationing of foreign forces in France since 1966.

Another recent example of France's efforts to build a European defense is the new willingness in Paris to discuss the possible "Europeanization" of the French nuclear force. After having insisted for more than 30 years on the total autonomy of their nuclear deterrent forces and doctrine, French leaders have recently begun to suggest that certain modifications of that autonomy may become possible. On January 10, 1992, for example, President Mitterrand asked rhetorically whether it was "possible to conceive of a European nuclear doctrine" and asserted that "this will very quickly be the major question of a common defense policy."⁴⁵ Nine days later, Defense Minister Joxe noted that there were "things that could be new in the future" where French "cooperation with [her] allies was concerned, including in the nuclear domain" and alluded to possible discussions with Great Britain "on the conditions in which our nuclear weapons could be combined."⁴⁶ On January 29, Secretary of State for Defense Jacques Mellick outlined several different ways in which the French deterrent force could theoretically be "Europeanized," envisaging anything from "existential deterrence" (by which the French force, by its simple existence, would deter for Europe as a whole) to "concerted deterrence" (in which France would consult with its partners on nuclear questions) to a much more far-reaching (and for him implausible) European political authority responsible for nuclear weapons.⁴⁷ Finally, a March 19 *Libération* article co-authored by a French de-

⁴⁴Most official and expert interview sources in France are supportive of the European corps proposal, but many are concerned about its practical operation, citing constraints on German use of military force abroad as a primary difficulty. From interviews in Paris, April 1992.

⁴⁵See Jacques Amalric, "La France suggère à ses partenaires d'étudier une 'doctrine' nucléaire pour l'Europe," *Le Monde*, January 12–13, 1992, p. 1; and the (somewhat overstated) article by Ian Davidson, "France signals reversal of national defense doctrine," *Financial Times*, January 11–12, 1992.

⁴⁶See "M. Pierre Joxe insiste sur la nécessité d'une réflexion concernant l'avenir de la force de dissuasion française," *Le Monde*, January 21, 1992.

⁴⁷See "M. Mellick recense les différentes formules d'une doctrine nucléaire européenne," *Le Monde*, February 4, 1992, p. 18.

fense ministry official questioned France's long-term ability to pursue European political union but maintain purely national nuclear deterrence.⁴⁸

The notion of "Europeanizing" French nuclear deterrence poses many difficult questions, and a number of French officials have pointed out that it will be "a long time" before a European nuclear deterrent can be developed.⁴⁹ Mitterrand was careful to speak only of elaborating a nuclear "doctrine," and no French official has gone as far as the French president of the EC Commission Jacques Delors who has envisaged "the transferring of nuclear weapons to a strong [European] political authority."⁵⁰ Mellick, in fact, stated that such a development was "very far away," and questioned whether it was even desirable. For the foreseeable future, French nuclear policy in Europe is thus unlikely to involve anything more than discussion of strategy and possible technological collaboration with Great Britain. Still, the recent official French allusions to a "Europeanization" of nuclear deterrence are significant. Together with the growing French acceptance of military integration in Europe and calls for political union, they may be a sign that France is prepared to abandon certain elements of national sovereignty in the name of creating the European defense identity that has become its priority.

What explains the strength of the French interest in the development of a European security identity? Why are the French so unenthusiastic about the notion of a "second pillar" in NATO and so committed to European autonomy? What explains the apparently increasing willingness in France to accept constraints on its own freedom of maneuver in the name of European defense?

The first and most important factor in explaining recent French positions on European defense has doubtless been German unification. When initial French attempts to prevent or delay unification failed, many French leaders concluded that the only way to contain the new Germany's power would be through the development of a more far-

⁴⁸See Serge Grouard and Patrice van Ackere, "Pour une dissuasion européenne," *Libération*, March 19, 1992, p. 25. Given the position of one of the authors, the article would certainly not have been published without the formal approval of the Ministry of Defense.

⁴⁹See Joxe and Mellick in the articles cited above, and also Armed Forces Chief of Staff Jacques Lanxade's comments in "L'amiral Lanxade: la défense nucléaire européenne n'est pas pour demain," *Le Monde*, January 17, 1992.

⁵⁰Delors' words were: "I cannot help but think that if, one day, the European Community has a very strong political union, then why not [envisage] the transfer of nuclear weapons to that political authority?" See Amalric, "La France suggère à ses partenaires d'étudier une 'doctrine' nucléaire pour l'Europe," p. 1.

reaching European Community. French officials often point out, correctly, that creating a common European defense has long been a French policy objective and has been embraced by all French leaders including de Gaulle. But there is no doubt that the sudden emergence of a Germany with a population 41 percent greater than France's and a GDP 39 percent greater has given added impetus to France's willingness to accept constraints on its own policies in order to impose them on Germany.⁵¹ In this sense, French policy has come full circle: in 1950 France proposed a European army as an alternative to a German national army that might dominate Europe; French motivations today are not altogether different.

Second, creating an autonomous European security identity is for the French simply a matter of principle. If Europe is going to be a true, fully sovereign "political union," French officials argue, it must be legally and actually capable of dealing with defense. This is a view, elevated to the European level, that echoes de Gaulle's often-made arguments that ensuring national defense was a sovereign government's very *raison d'être*.⁵² Indeed, just as de Gaulle argued in the 1960s that France could not maintain a state if it was not responsible for national security, French leaders today argue that a European Union without a common security policy and eventually a common defense "would be incomplete."⁵³ Nearly all French leaders accept (as de Gaulle accepted) that this defense entity could cooperate closely and formally with the United States. But it is simply unacceptable to them that a European Union not have the explicit right and capability to carry out its own policies in an area as important as defense. For the French, to borrow Pierre Lellouche's phrase, "*L'Europe sera stratégique ou ne sera pas*."⁵⁴

⁵¹For economic and population figures, see *Main Economic Indicators*, Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD), April 1992, pp. 174, 180; and *European Economy*, No. 50, December 1991, p. 40.

⁵²De Gaulle's views on the link between sovereignty and national security are best articulated in his November 3, 1959 Ecole Militaire speech. See Charles de Gaulle, *Discours et Messages* 3, Plon, Paris, 1970, pp. 125–129.

⁵³From the Franco-German proposal of February 4, 1991. See "European Security Policy: The Franco-German Proposals at the Intergovernmental Conference of the Twelve on Political Union," *Europe Documents*, No. 1690, February 15, 1991. Roland Dumas has also insisted that "it is inconceivable to leave security aspects at the margin of this process: defense is . . . an element of sovereignty with which the federal entity . . . will—or should—be endowed." Dumas, at a December 10 WEU Ministerial Council, cited in David S. Yost, "France and West European defense identity," *Survival* 33, July–August 1991, pp. 327–351.

⁵⁴"Europe will be strategic or it will not exist." See Pierre Lellouche, "*L'Europe sera stratégique ou ne sera pas*," *Le Monde*, December 21, 1988, p. 2.

A third, and more practical, reason the French seek a genuine European defense is as a matter of long-term insurance. Perhaps because they have been questioning American reliability in Europe for so long, many French leaders and analysts seem considerably less optimistic than their neighbors about the long-term American role there. As already seen, French leaders from across the political spectrum have come out clearly for an American presence on the continent, but these same leaders are far from convinced their appeals will be heard in Washington (or accepted in Bonn or Berlin). Many in France fear that the Americans—with enormous fiscal problems, pressing social difficulties at home, and deprived of a geopolitical “enemy”—will be tempted to turn inward in years to come. Moreover, they believe, Americans so used to unchallenged hegemony will prove incapable of playing a reduced role in the new Alliance; they will insist on leading it or they will leave. A diplomatic Mitterrand will only go so far as to question whether “the United States will always be on the front lines to defend Europe,” but many French officials and analysts would concur with former prime minister Edith Cresson’s more direct assessment: “It is evident that the United States is disengaging from Europe . . . it can’t leave and ask us Europeans not to have a defense of our own.”⁵⁵ Another former prime minister, Michel Rocard, points to U.S. inaction in Yugoslavia as an example of the sort of military crisis Europe might have to face without the United States:

Can Europeans be confronted with crises that do not concern the United States? To some, the very idea was seen as a blow to transatlantic solidarity. The conflict in Yugoslavia has changed all that. Rightly or wrongly, the United States decided that its interests and ideas of international stability were not at stake in this crisis, and it let the EC act independently. This is the type of crisis Europe is likely to face in the years to come, and it illustrates why Europe must have the military means to support its policies.⁵⁶

The French thus seek to create an autonomous European defense as insurance for future contingencies in or around Europe—a conservative reaction in Russia, instability or wars in Eastern Europe, or perhaps most important, serious unrest in North Africa—that the United States would be unwilling or unable to deal with. The French clearly recognize that where useful and possible (as in the Persian Gulf),

⁵⁵For Mitterrand, see the interview in *Le Monde*, October 23, 1991, p. 10. For Cresson, see the *Wall Street Journal*, July 15, 1991, p. 1.

⁵⁶See Rocard’s November 1991 Leffingwell Lectures to the Council on Foreign Relations in New York, published as Michel Rocard, *Europe and the United States*, Critical Issues No. 2, Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1992, p. 14.

Europe and the United States must cooperate closely in international security affairs; but they are not convinced that in 10 or 20 years the United States will be as capable and prepared to do so as it has been in the past.⁵⁷

The final attraction of a European security identity for French leaders is as a tool for achieving French influence both within the Alliance and throughout the world. As already argued, the French have never passively accepted exclusive American leadership of Western security affairs, and believe a capable and credibly independent European military capacity would ensure that Europe would not be ignored by either Washington or some global adversary. The French have clearly not abandoned their interest in a respected voice and global role, and increasingly believe these can be exercised only through Europe. As President Mitterrand has argued: "France will be all the more influential, prosperous and radiant in the world if she plays her role in Europe, and this role will be consistent with her history, a determining role."⁵⁸ Nicole Gnesotto, the French deputy director of the WEU's Institute for Security Studies, also sees a European security entity as a necessary means to global influence:

Does the European Community see itself in the future as a purely civilian and economic entity with a strictly European vocation . . . ? Or does it see itself as a world power with global responsibilities and influence? [. . .] The French clearly choose the second option. This is neither a militaristic vision of international relations nor a willingness to build Europe as a third bloc, but a matter of principle. [. . .] Europe . . . cannot be an effective diplomatic actor . . . if its authority is not backed by serious military power.⁵⁹

And Roland Dumas' comment on Europe's role in the Middle East peace process is also indicative of the French view of Europe's proper role:

Europe doesn't want to be a mere observer in the peace process in the Mideast . . . Europe is seeking to participate in the same capacity as the

⁵⁷Even in contingencies in which the United States might be willing to act, the French like to point out, the WEU has its advantages: it is not subject to the same sort of restrictive geographical limits as NATO, and its mutual defense clauses are more far-reaching than those of the Washington Treaty.

⁵⁸See "Les déclarations du président de la République," *Le Monde*, October 23, 1991, p. 10.

⁵⁹See Nicole Gnesotto, "France and the New Europe," in David P. Calleo and Philip H. Gordon (eds.), *From the Atlantic to the Urals: National Perspectives on the New Europe*, Seven Locks' Press, Arlington, Virginia, 1992, p. 135.

United States and the Soviet Union with which it can rightly be compared given its 340 million inhabitants . . . it wants a major role as participant and co-sponsor.⁶⁰

While few in France would object to these perspectives, it is instructive to ask whether the above statements could have been made in any European country but France.

Despite some of the ambitious rhetoric, however, the French view of the European security identity should not be seen as more dogmatic or zealous than it really is. Whereas French leaders certainly seem to believe in a more autonomous and more robust European security policy, they are not optimistic about creating it anytime soon, and do not want to abandon any Atlantic guarantees in the meantime. Indeed, even the most fervent French proponents of a European security entity recognize that any concrete manifestation of such an entity will take many years to build. President Mitterrand, for example, has admitted that while "inevitable" in the long run, the creation of an autonomous European military capacity "does not seem imminent," and Foreign Minister Dumas has distinguished between the "real" (NATO) and the "eventual" (EC defense).⁶¹ As Defense Minister Joxe explained:

The constitution of a true European defense identity will take some time. In order to command, a single authority is necessary, and that does not yet exist at the European level. Even before that, a political agreement about the goals to be pursued is also necessary, especially in time of crisis.⁶²

French leaders are thus not naive about the short-term prospects of a true European security identity, and they do not expect one to be in place and fully functioning anytime soon. Their goal, however, is to set in motion a process that they believe would help bind Germany to Europe, lay the foundations for a European political union, serve as

⁶⁰See Dumas cited in French Embassy, *News from France*, Vol. 91.08, May 2, 1991.

⁶¹See Mitterrand at the Forum de l'Ecole de guerre, "La défense de l'Europe de l'Ouest ne peut se concevoir que dans le respect de l'alliance atlantique," *Le Monde*, April 13, 1991, p. 5. For Dumas, see Claire Tréan, "Défense: les divergences entre Paris et Washington," *Le Monde*, June 8, 1991. Also see the interview with Mitterrand in *Le Monde*, June 20, 1990, pp. 1-4.

⁶²See Joxe's declaration, "La constitution d'une véritable identité européenne en matière de défense prendra du temps," *Le Monde*, March 24-25, 1991. Mitterrand has also admitted that while "a Europe capable of ensuring its own defense remains a desirable objective . . . a common defense cannot do without a prerequisite political union." Cited in Claire Tréan, "Pour MM. Kohl et Mitterrand, le rattachement de la RDA devra renforcer le couple franco-allemand," *Le Monde*, September 20, 1990, p. 4.

insurance against an American withdrawal, and enhance French influence throughout the world—all traditional French goals.

FRENCH PROPOSALS ON CSCE

French proposals for European security are not limited to the European security identity and it would be wrong to conclude a discussion of French motivations and proposals for European security without a consideration of French views of the CSCE. As an alternative to what they see as NATO's "takeover" of pan-European security questions via the NACC, French leaders have shown increasing interest in the CSCE, the only European organization in which all European states are equal and sovereign members. A stronger CSCE is a logical complement to the narrower EC-based security identity France is trying to create in that it would give Central and East European states a more meaningful role in European security without allowing them to enter formally into the EC itself.

Increasing French interest in CSCE is reflected in recent French proposals to strengthen that organization. At the CSCE's March 1992 Helsinki meeting, France proposed the elaboration of a "CSCE Security Treaty" that would codify and give legal status to the CSCE's fundamental principles.⁶³ French diplomats argue that a CSCE Treaty would enhance the Conference's legal authority and thereby increase its standing in the eyes of its participants. It would also enable those participants to understand better the rights and obligations that go along with membership in the Conference. France has also proposed, this time along with Germany, to strengthen the CSCE's existing institutional structures—the Conflict Prevention Center, Center for Free Elections, and Secretariat—and to develop an arbitration and conciliation procedure that could be invoked by CSCE members.⁶⁴ The arbitration procedure would be designed to help settle international disputes and thereby help avert potential conflicts before they occur.

It is worth noting, however, that France, unlike Germany, does *not* support independent peacekeeping forces for the Conference.⁶⁵

⁶³See "Intervention du Ministre d'Etat [Roland Dumas] à l'ouverture de la quatrième réunion principale sur les suites de la CSCE," Helsinki, March 24, 1992, *Bulletin d'Information*, March 25, 1992 (055/92), French Foreign Ministry.

⁶⁴*Ibid.*, p. 6.

⁶⁵Interviews in Paris, April 1992. For recent German proposals on CSCE, see Foreign Minister Genscher's address to the Helsinki meeting, "FRG's Genscher Makes Address," *FBIS-WEU-92-058*, March 25, 1992, p. 2.

French diplomats argue that where peacekeeping or any potential use of military force is concerned, the CSCE should call on other institutions, such as the WEU or even NATO, to carry out its operations. French enthusiasm for the CSCE is growing as French leaders realize that collective security may be both more possible and necessary given that new security requirements of the post-Cold War world. But this enthusiasm is likely to remain limited by France's preference for a narrower European security identity in which the French believe their own role and influence would be much greater than in the pan-European CSCE.

FRANCE AND THE PERSIAN GULF WAR: POLITICAL LESSONS AND IMPLICATIONS FOR THE ARMED FORCES

During the final stages of the Gulf War, with French troops fighting alongside Americans under U.S. command, it was tempting to see France's participation in the U.S.-led coalition as a watershed that would mark France's return to the Atlantic fold and lead it to abandon some of its loftier aspirations to independence and power. Although Paris had been reluctant to follow Washington's lead at the onset of the crisis, once the war began French support was unambiguous: French troops served effectively under U.S. commands; French public opinion strongly supported American policy; French leaders officially backed U.S. diplomacy; and the French military seemed to begin drawing lessons about their supposed "independence." By the end of the conflict, senior French officials were referring to the "synergy" between the French and American positions, a nationalist and somewhat anti-American defense minister had resigned, and President Mitterrand had initiated a far-reaching review of French military policies and force structures.⁶⁶ When in March 1991 Mitterrand confirmed French support for U.S. policies in an affable summit with George Bush, and France reversed an earlier decision not to participate in NATO's strategy review, it indeed seemed as if the Gulf War was going to prove a major turning point in French foreign and security policy.⁶⁷

⁶⁶Elysée spokesman Hubert Védrine's reference to the "synergy" and "proximity" between the French and American positions is cited in Claire Tréan, "MM. Bush et Mitterrand célèbrent l'entente franco-américaine," March 15, 1991. On Chevènement's resignation, see Ian Davidson, "French defence minister quits over Gulf policies," *Financial Times*, January 30, 1991.

⁶⁷On France joining the NATO strategy review, see Theresa Hitchens, "French Turnabout May Lead to Compromise on NATO Dispute," *Defense News*, March 18, 1991, p. 16. On the excellent relations between Mitterrand and Bush just after the Gulf War, see Claire Tréan, "MM. Bush et Mitterrand célèbrent l'entente franco-améri-

A closer look at French conclusions about the Gulf War, however, suggests that France's reconsideration of its global security role may not be as fundamental as some initially thought. Whereas the war certainly reminded the French of their operational military limits (discussed below) and the consequent need for transatlantic cooperation, it did not convince them to abandon their traditional political aims. On the contrary, French participation in the war and cooperation with the United States can be explained as much by a French desire to avoid "marginalization" as by any acceptance of a minor or subordinate alliance role; France did not want to be left on the sidelines while the Americans and British won the war and made the peace. Even under de Gaulle, it should be remembered, the French always took the position that when conditions warranted it, France should cooperate with the United States. That this was the case for the duration of the Gulf War does not imply that it will be so in future cases. As Elysée spokesman Hubert Védrine put it: "One does not express [political] differences just for fun. One does so when it is necessary, which is not the case today."⁶⁸

For the French government, if the Gulf War exposed Gaullist "illusions" about France's special relations with the Arab world (Roland Dumas' words), it also confirmed some long-standing Gaullist views about American leadership, international statecraft, and the relationship between military and political power.⁶⁹ It was not lost on French leaders that the decision to go to war was taken primarily in Washington—because the Americans had the vast majority of the forces present in the region—and that Europe was faced with a *fait accompli* when President Bush decided to augment the U.S. troop presence in November 1990. The French, moreover, saw it as an "affront to Europe" when Saddam Hussein allowed his foreign minister to meet with the American secretary of state but refused to receive

caine," *Le Monde*, March 15, 1991, p. 1; Michel Colomès, "Mitterrand-Bush: Un pas de deux," *Le Point*, March 18, 1991, pp. 24–25; and William Drozdiak, "French-U.S. Relations Blossom Amid Desert Storm," *Washington Post*, February 26, 1991. Since the end of the Gulf War, French-American relations have deteriorated significantly. See Michel Tatu, "Tangage franco-américain," *Le Monde*, May 29, 1992, pp. 1, 5; and William Drozdiak, "U.S.-French Tensions Called Peril to Alliance," *The Washington Post*, May 27, 1992, p. A21.

⁶⁸See Claire Tréan, "M.M. Bush et Mitterrand célèbrent l'entente franco-américaine," *Le Monde*, March, 15, 1991, p. 1.

⁶⁹For Dumas, see "Un entretien avec M. Roland Dumas," *Le Monde*, March 12, 1991.

a European Community delegation.⁷⁰ Some French officials were reminded of Stalin's condescending question about how many divisions the pope had in World War II, and were insulted by the comparison: Without military force, France and Europe's political roles were negligible.

Along similar lines, with the Americans and British leading the efforts to organize the peace after the war, Mitterrand's former adviser (and at the time president of the Foreign Affairs Commission of the National Assembly) Michel Vauzelle expressed fears of another "Yalta"—from which France would again be excluded—and Defense Minister Chevènement worried that Europe was being "relegated to a secondary role."⁷¹ President Mitterrand himself elected in his first speech after the war to emphasize not the liberation of Kuwait but rather that France had "upheld its role and its rank." Mitterrand did not even mention "Europe" in his speech.⁷² Even French public opinion, thought to be less interested in "grandeur" than the political elites, appeared to resent France's inferior political and military position: 60 percent of French people surveyed thought France was "too subordinate to the United States," and only 37 percent thought France was not.⁷³ In other words, as clearly as the Gulf War revealed French military inadequacies, it would be a mistake to assume that the French will conclude that military power and political influence are futile or beyond their reach. Much like the Suez crisis of 1956, the Persian Gulf War may lead the French to pursue more aggressively their objectives of international status and influence—perhaps this time in a more European context—rather than to give them up.

In addition to confirming French anxieties about diplomatic subordination, the Gulf War taught the French a number of specific lessons about the weaknesses of their conventional military forces and their capacity for intervention abroad. First, French means of force projection were clearly inadequate for the task at hand, despite the 1983 creation of the Force d'Action Rapide (FAR) and the traditional emphasis on France's "global" role. To get even its limited and relatively light equipment to the Gulf, France—with only three modern landing

⁷⁰See Claire Tréan, "Le refus de Bagdad de rencontrer les Douze est un camouflet pour l'Europe," *Le Monde*, January 8, 1991.

⁷¹For Vauzelle's comment, see "M. Michel Vauzelle et Yalta," *Le Monde*, February 10–11, 1991. For Chevènement, see "M. Chevènement craint que M. Mitterrand ne renonce au 'rôle moteur' de la France en Europe," *Le Monde*, April, 29, 1991.

⁷²See Jean-Marie Colombani, "Le 'rang' de la France," *Le Monde*, March 5, 1991; and André Fontaine, "Retrouver l'Europe," *Le Monde*, March 8, 1991.

⁷³Institut Français d'Opinion Publique (IFOP) poll of February 1991.

platform docks (LPDs)—had to execute more than 100 military DC-8 missions, over 200 Transall and Hercules missions, 37 trips of 747 cargo planes, and 50 missions of civilian ships. All of this took more than three weeks, and underscored the gap between France's global rhetoric and the country's lift, logistics, and force projection capabilities.⁷⁴ Second, most of France's tactical aircraft in the Gulf (Jaguars built in the late 1960s and early 1970s) had never been adequately modernized over the years and their outdated equipment and lack of avionics made it impossible for them to fly in bad weather or at night. Although France did send an aircraft carrier (the *Clemenceau*) to the Gulf, its aging Crusaders were so inadequate for modern air warfare that they were not deployed, and the carrier transported only helicopters and trucks.⁷⁵ France's more advanced planes—the Mirage 2000Ns—were not configured for conventional missions and also remained inactive in France.⁷⁶ Third, President Mitterrand's decision not to send conscripts to fight in a foreign war meant that the number of soldiers available for duty in the Gulf was severely limited. Not only was the overall percentage of conscripts in the French armed forces high (55 percent for the army, 26 percent for the navy, and 37 percent for the air force), but several key units, including the FAR and the *Clemenceau* crew, were made up largely of nonprofessional soldiers who could not be sent abroad. This was the primary reason that France, with an army of 280,000 and a rapid ac-

⁷⁴France's transport capability was also hindered by the fact that although all of its aircraft are now capable of in-flight refueling, only 11 aging C-135 tankers are available to service them. The figures in the text on French logistics in the Gulf were provided by Pierre Joxe in a June 6, 1991 speech to the National Assembly, text provided by French Ministry of Defense, pp. 4-5. For a more thorough assessment of France's airlift and sealift capacities, see Diego A. Ruiz-Palmer, *French Strategic Options in the 1990s*, Adelphi Paper 260, International Institute for Strategic Studies (IISS), London, Summer 1991, pp. 65-71.

⁷⁵The French navy is the last in the world to fly the 1950s-vintage Crusaders, the Philippine navy having replaced its Crusaders in 1988. In late 1989, French navy leaders recommended that France buy or lease U.S. F-18s until the maritime version of the French-made Rafale is deployed (around 1997), but then-defense minister Chevènement chose to extend the life of the Crusader instead. Contracting the French group Dassault to do the refurbishing, Chevènement argued that "the maintenance of a French aeronautical industry competitive on a world scale is part of the defense of France." For a contemporary report on the Crusader decision, see Edward Cody, "French Turn Down U.S. F-18s," *Washington Post*, December 23, 1989.

⁷⁶The Mirage 2000N can apparently be adapted for use in conventional missions within two weeks using what is called a "Kit K2" and it is not yet clear why this was not done. Explanations range from the delays involved in conversion, to the need to maintain the nuclear deterrent for the national sanctuary, to the air force chief of staff's unwillingness to risk his best planes in a conflict with Iraq. For some hypotheses, see Elie Marcuse and James Sarazin, "Une armée à réformer," *L'Express*, March 29, 1991, pp. 11-13; and Ian Davidson, "Paris 'holding back' Mirage 2000N," *Financial Times*, January 26-27, 1991, p. 3.

tion force of 47,000, was able to put together only 12,000 troops for its land-based Daguet division. In an often-made comparison, Great Britain, with a professional army of only 160,000, was able to send 35,000 troops to the Gulf.⁷⁷ Finally and perhaps most important (as will be discussed below), France's military intelligence capability was severely limited in the Gulf, requiring French forces to rely heavily on the United States for vital information.

As a result of these military lessons, France has already begun to make some significant changes in its armed forces with the intention of improving its capacity to intervene militarily abroad. Although the final form and extent of these changes will not be known until the adoption of a new five-year military program law (now scheduled for fall 1992), a number of their features are starting to become clear.⁷⁸

1. A New Command Structure for the Armed Forces. In November 1991, army chief of staff Amédée Monchal announced that the command structure of the armed forces would be reorganized to provide greater flexibility and to facilitate force projection abroad. The new structure will consist of two distinct joint staffs (mostly army and air force officers), one of which would be oriented primarily toward actions in Europe, the other primarily toward actions abroad. Each joint staff, in turn, would be able to draw forces as necessary from two distinct "reservoirs" of troops, of which the first (designed primarily for Europe) will consist mainly of heavy, armored, and tracked vehicles and the second (designed for overseas) will be lighter and easier to deploy abroad. At the same time, Monchal confirmed that the French army will be reduced in size from 280,400 to around 230,000 by 1997. He points out that while some other European armies are being reduced by up to 30 percent (in contrast with

⁷⁷Not only are France's professional soldiers thoroughly integrated with conscripts, but many of them serve overseas or in administrative positions from which they could not easily be removed. Thus, some 5000 professional troops had to be taken out of 400 different units to fill out the ranks of the FAR and the Foreign Legion. On the percentages of various French forces that are professional, see Ewen Faudon (pseudonym of a French official), "La guerre avec l'Irak et la programmation militaire française," *Libération*, February 27, 1991; Jean Guisnel, "Le dispositif français mal adapté au conflit," *Libération*, February 1, 1991, pp. 7-8; and Pascal Vennesson, "Une année charnière pour les forces armées," in Dominique Chagnollaude (ed.), *Etat politique de la France*, Année 1991, Quai Voltaire, Paris, 1992, pp. 147-148.

⁷⁸For an excellent, comprehensive analysis of French military adaptations in the wake of the Gulf War, see David S. Yost, "France and the Persian Gulf War: Military and Political Lessons Learned," unpublished paper, Naval Postgraduate School, Monterey, California.

France's 20–24 percent), the reductions in the French army began earlier, having fallen from a peak of 330,000 in 1977.⁷⁹

2. A More Professional Army. In March 1991 (just after the war), Mitterrand explained and reaffirmed his policy on deploying conscripts abroad, but seemed to admit the need for a reconfiguration of professionals and conscripts:

If it is a question of protecting the national territory and contributing to the defense of Europe, the participation of all citizens, what is called conscription, seems necessary to me. If it is a question of operations far away, our professional soldiers have the competence and mobility. A debate on the internal balance of our armed forces, on their composition and nature, is essential.⁸⁰

Thus, while the Socialists remain committed to the “republican” principle of universal military service, they are likely to “professionalize” France’s overseas-intervention units, including the FAR. According to General Monchal, whereas the share of professionals in the new French army will remain less than 50 percent in 1997 (110,000 professionals in an army of 230,000), the “reservoirs” designed for service abroad will be made up primarily of professionals and conscripts who have volunteered for missions abroad.⁸¹ The opposition RPR has gone even further and now officially supports the development of a fully professional army for France, an idea that seems to enjoy broad public support.⁸²

3. Less Emphasis on Nuclear Weapons. Despite official government pronouncements that nuclear deterrence remains “the cornerstone of French defense,” it is already clear that the nuclear priority is rapidly being diminished.⁸³ Since the summer of 1991, the gov-

⁷⁹See Jacques Isnard, “L’armée de terre perdra le cinquième de ses effectifs,” November 14, 1991, p. 1. For some earlier “lessons” for the army from the Gulf War, see Jacques Isnard, “La division ‘Daguet’ devrait préfigurer un nouveau modèle d’unité d’intervention,” *Le Monde*, April 18, 1991, p. 40.

⁸⁰See Mitterrand’s comments in *Le Monde*, March 3, 1991, p. 6.

⁸¹See Jacques Isnard, “L’armée de terre perdra le cinquième de ses effectifs,” *Le Monde*, November 14, 1991, p. 1.

⁸²See Jean-Louis Saux, “Le RPR se prononce pour l’abandon de la conscription sans consulter ses partenaires de l’opposition,” *Le Monde*, October 4, 1991, p. 13. On public support for a professional army, see Christian Markarian, “Les Français pour l’armée de métier,” *Le Point*, March 18–24, 1991.

⁸³New prime minister Pierre Bérégovoy called nuclear weapons “the cornerstone of French defense” in his first speech to the National Assembly. See “Je chercherai, non par la démagogie mais par l’action à restaurer la confiance et renouer avec l’espérance,” *Le Monde*, April 10, 1992, p. 8. For a similar statement by President Mitterrand, see

ernment has announced decisions to cancel the S-45 mobile missile, limit production and cancel deployment of the Hadès (the 30 missiles and 15 launchers will be placed in storage), disband without replacing two Pluton regiments, delay production of the new generation nuclear submarine, and declare a one-year moratorium on nuclear testing in the South Pacific.⁸⁴ For the first time in over thirty years, French spending in the nuclear military domain will decline (by about 3 percent from 1991–1992).⁸⁵ New conventional military priorities include tactical air capabilities (notably the air force and maritime versions of the Rafale), advanced “smart” missiles (such as the highly effective but extremely costly AS30 laser-guided missile), air and sea transport capacity (perhaps including purchases of the American C-17), and most of all, military reconnaissance and communications satellites (discussed below).

4. Satellites and Information Technology. Nowhere is the French interest in greater military-political autonomy more evident than in the domain of military intelligence and satellites. An independent capability for the collection and processing of battlefield information has become the new symbol of France’s aspiration to political “rank,” much in the way nuclear weapons were in the 1960s. Indeed, Pierre Joxe has asserted that “space means will bring about changes as important as those caused by nuclear strategy and deterrence,” and that “the same reasons that led France to equip itself with an autonomous capacity for nuclear deterrence must now lead us to develop an autonomous capacity for space observation.”⁸⁶ As another government official put it, reflecting a widespread French view:

his televised interview of April 12, 1992, “Les déclarations du Président de la République,” *Le Monde*, April 14, 1992, p. 12.

⁸⁴For a discussion of some of these decisions, see Jacques Isnard, “Moratoire sur les essais nucléaires: la dissuasion n’a plus la même priorité,” *Le Monde*, April 10, 1992, p. 11.

⁸⁵See Jacques Isnard, “La France réduira ses investissements nucléaires,” *Le Monde*, October 30, 1991, p. 14. In terms of budget authority for future nuclear spending, the 1992 figure is down 16.1 percent from the previous year. See the report for the Finance Commission of the National Assembly by Alain Richard and François Hollande, *Rapport* No. 2255, October 9, 1991, p. 65.

⁸⁶See Joxe cited in *Le Monde*, April 12, 1991 and Joxe’s May 6, 1991 speech to the French national war college (IHEDN), “Défense et renseignement,” *Défense nationale*, July 1991, pp. 13–15. Other French sources also believe that satellite capabilities will be to the 21st century what nuclear weapons were to the latter half of the 20th, and emphasize the similarities between the present situation and that of the early 1960s. “Then,” according to one interview source, “the Americans wrongly told us that nuclear weapons cost too much, were technically too complex for France, and would be redundant in an alliance context. This is exactly what the Americans are saying about satellites today.”

Intelligence should be an absolute priority. If we played a real military role in the Gulf, we [nonetheless] remained permanently dependent on the Americans for intelligence from space. This is no longer acceptable.⁸⁷

According to *Le Point*, "one of the principal lessons [of the Gulf War] is that France can only hope to uphold the rank to which it aspires if it has effective intelligence systems at its disposal."⁸⁸

Such an emphasis on satellite observation and communication seems not only to have the support of President Mitterrand—who was reportedly incensed when American officials would not allow the French to keep the satellite photos they showed them—but has become the top priority of Joxe and the Ministry of Defense. Joxe now speaks of "the absolute necessity for Europe to endow itself with its own means of space observation," and argues that "there will come a time when simply having high-resolution observation systems will give such power that those who do not have them will be disarmed, whatever their other weapons."⁸⁹ "More than anything," he told the French parliament when discussing the lessons of the Gulf War,

we must profoundly reconsider our intelligence systems on both the strategic and tactical levels. The weakness of these means prevented us from having access to necessary information in an autonomous and complete fashion. Without intelligence from the allies, that is to say the Americans, we were almost blind. To leave our systems in their present state of insufficiency and dependence would be to weaken considerably our present and future defense effort.⁹⁰

Joxe has proposed to give military intelligence—to which he devoted the entirety of his first address as defense minister to the IHEDN—the status of an official branch of the armed services and (within the context of a declining overall 1992 defense budget) to increase the

⁸⁷An unnamed participant in meetings on the subject at the prime minister's office, cited in Jean Guisnel, "La France cherche son salut dans l'espace," *Libération*, April 4, 1991.

⁸⁸See Roger Jolly, "Renseignement: la grande misère," *Le Point*, March 18–24, 1991, p. 16.

⁸⁹See Pierre Servent, "Le gouvernement et les députés tirent les enseignements de la guerre du Golfe," *Le Monde*, June 6, 1991, p. 9; and Joxe's June 4, 1991 speech to the WEU Assembly, cited in Giovanni de Briganti, "France Offers Helios Data to Allies," *Defense News*, June 10, 1991.

⁹⁰See Joxe's speech to the National Assembly on June 6, 1991, text provided by French Ministry of Defense, pp. 9–10.

budget for military space programs by nearly 18 percent.⁹¹ French ambitions in space, finally, are hardly limited to the Defense Ministry or the present government: even Edouard Balladur, a supposedly "Atlanticist" leader of the RPR, has argued that Europe must have its own observation satellites "in order to avoid [a situation in which] European countries are blind if they do not benefit from information supplied by the Americans."⁹²

As evident from the Joxe and Balladur statements above, French leaders have now begun to speak of "autonomy" and "independence" largely in a European context (rather than a national one), and the French are making great efforts to rally the other Europeans to their cause. Their success has been limited so far, but includes Italian and Spanish agreements to fund partially the Hélios intelligence satellite (with 14.1 and 7 percent shares, respectively) and a June 1991 decision by the WEU to set up a satellite data interpretation center in Torréjon, Spain. The center will train European experts in satellite data interpretation as well as process and share accessible data among member-states.⁹³ France has also strongly supported—this time with the support of Great Britain—the development of a network of European military telecommunications satellites by the year 2005. France (with its Syracuse network deployed in 1984) and Great Britain (with its Skynet network) are the only European countries with autonomous satellite communications systems, but the systems neither work together nor offer full worldwide coverage. In November 1991, France and Great Britain proposed to study the development of a European military satellite network (Eumilsatcom) jointly with four other European countries (Germany, the Netherlands, Spain, and Italy).⁹⁴ France has also sought more ambitious European and WEU space cooperation from Germany, but Bonn does not seem as ready to pay for such capabilities as Paris would like.

⁹¹See Joxe's May 6, 1991 speech to the IHEDN, "Défense et renseignement," in *Défense nationale*, July 1991, pp. 9–22; and Peter de Selding, "French 1992 Defense Spending to Decline by 2 Percent," *Defense News*, November 18, 1991, p. 8. The budget for military space programs will rise from just over FFfr3 billion for 1991 to FFfr3.5 billion for 1992.

⁹²See Edouard Balladur, "Pour une nouvelle politique de défense," *Le Monde*, March 6, 1991, pp. 1–2. The orthodox "Gaullist" wing of the RPR takes a similar view: see Philippe Séguin, "La nouvelle armée française," *Le Monde*, June 6, 1991.

⁹³See the communiqué of the WEU Council of Ministers, June 27, 1991, Vianden, Luxembourg, p. 6.

⁹⁴See Giovanni de Briganti, "Five European Nations to Study Military Satellite Network," *Defense News*, December 9, 1991, p. 40; and "Six pays européens étudient la mise en chantier d'un système spatial de communications militaires," *Le Monde*, November 12, 1991.

The changes being made in the French armed forces in the wake of the Gulf War are thus considerable, and Joxe does not exaggerate when he speaks of "a new era for [France's] defense . . . a cycle that will probably be on the order of a generation, like the one that began at the beginning of the 1960s."⁹⁵ As important as these military lessons are, however, they should not obscure—indeed they go far to confirm—the political lessons discussed above. France did not conclude from the Gulf War that its only future military option is to ally itself more closely with the United States. On the contrary, France's determination to develop its force projection and military intelligence capabilities are evidence of a renewed French desire to liberate Europe from its military dependence on Washington. One might say that the French reaction to their experience in the Gulf was not so much "How wonderful to cooperate so well with the Americans!" but rather "How can we avoid being so dependent next time around?"

⁹⁵See Jean-Louis Saux, "Les incertitudes internationales 'interdisent d'amputer notre dispositif de défense,' déclare M. Joxe," *Le Monde*, November 15, 1991, p. 10. General Monchal also points out that the new army reform is "as great as that undertaken during the 1960s, at the end of the Algerian War." See Isnard, "L'armée de terre perdra le cinquième de ses effectifs," *Le Monde*, November 14, 1991, p. 12.

4. NEAR-TERM PROSPECTS FOR CHANGE: THREE SCENARIOS

In order to develop sound American policies toward France, it is important to consider not only how French policy has evolved over the past two or three years but how it is likely to evolve in the future. What are the prospects for significant changes in the French security policies discussed in Section 3? Such a question, of course, is difficult to answer about a country where nearly all important defense decisions are taken by the president and a small circle of advisers. Since the Gulf War, in fact—which Mitterrand ran almost exclusively from the Elysée—the president has decided to initiate an integrated Franco-German corps, cancel the S-45 missile, forgo deployment of the Hadès, declare a moratorium on French nuclear tests in the Pacific, and fundamentally reorganize the army, all with very little or no consultation of the parties, parliament, or the rest of the government.¹ Given the volatile French political scene and Mitterrand's penchant for surprises, anything can happen on short notice.

With that caveat in mind, a careful look at the situation in France today nonetheless suggests that significant change in French security policy is unlikely, at least in the short term. The government of Pierre Bérégovoy—appointed to replace Edith Cresson after the disastrous showing of the Socialist Party in the March 1992 regional elections—has little time to prepare for the 1993 legislative elections and is faced with a number of pressing domestic problems.² The French unemployment rate is now close to 10 percent and rising; problems with immigration have fomented support for the extremist National Front and led to violence and racial tension in major urban areas; the Socialist Party is tarnished by political scandal and overt factionalism; and the French economy is mired in a near-recession

¹For a discussion of Mitterrand's increasing domination of French foreign and defense policy, see Jolyon Howorth, "François Mitterrand and the 'Domaine Réservé': From Cohabitation to the Gulf War," *French Politics and Society*, Vol. 10, No. 1, Winter 1992, pp. 43–58.

²The Socialist Party received only 18.3 percent of the vote in the March 22 regional elections, not much more than the extreme-right National Front (13.9 percent), the two ecologist parties (together, 13.9 percent), and much less than the center-right RPR-UDF (33 percent). These results were widely interpreted as a protest against the traditional parties, and especially against the Socialist government of Edith Cresson. See "L'électorat a sanctionné le PS et le gouvernement," *Le Monde*, March 24, 1992, p. 1.

with a growth rate of just over 2 percent. Mitterrand himself is increasingly seen by the public as "worn out," and is engaged in the difficult process of seeking ratification of the European Political Union treaty, a task that entails revision of the French constitution as well.³ In this sort of domestic political climate, any major changes in France's security policy would be surprising, and the April 1992 reappointments of Foreign Minister Dumas and Defense Minister Joxe in the Bérégovoy government can be taken as a confirmation of the relative status quo.

Prospects for a change in France's approach to security might be somewhat greater after 1993. With legislative elections scheduled for that year and presidential elections scheduled for 1995, France will inevitably soon see a change in leadership, and the Mitterrand era that began 11 years ago will be over. Barring a sudden political crisis leading to a wholesale change of regime, possible but not likely, three broad political scenarios seem most plausible over the coming three years, each of which would have implications for France's security policy in Europe and abroad.

A SOCIALIST RECOVERY

If the Bérégovoy government should somehow manage to turn the domestic political situation around by next spring, the Socialists could perhaps prevent a majority for the center-right, and with their own support from the center manage to form a government led by the Socialist Party (PS). In this case, Mitterrand could serve out his term until 1995 and continue his priority efforts to develop an autonomous defense identity for the European Community. The president would certainly try to press ahead with the European Union as his major historical legacy to France and to Europe. Pressure from the Ministry of Defense to improve transatlantic military relations would perhaps continue but would be unlikely to produce any major alterations in French NATO policy as it has evolved since 1990. France would continue down the present path of modest reductions in the defense budget, significant cuts in the size of the armed forces, and new military

³In March 1992, 61 percent of French people polled wanted Mitterrand to resign before the end of his mandate, and 53 percent described the Socialist Party as "worn out." Only 7 percent said the government was "doing a good job." See "Socialist party worn out," says French poll," *Financial Times*, March 3, 1992. For a poll showing that 61 percent of the French believe Mitterrand himself to be "worn out," see the SOFRES-L'Express survey, "Les Français et leurs dirigeants," *L'Express*, September 13, 1991.

priorities on space, satellite intelligence, and means for strategic lift. Whereas this political scenario may be the most predictable, it may also be the most unlikely—few analysts believe the Socialists will be part of the majority after next spring.

EARLY PRESIDENTIAL ELECTIONS

If the fortunes of the PS do not improve by next year, some political observers believe Mitterrand would be tempted to resign *before* the 1993 legislatives, provoking early presidential elections. One of the paradoxes of contemporary French politics is that while the center-right parties are presently more popular than those of the left, the most plausible presidential candidates are Socialists. Michel Rocard (the likely official candidate of the PS) and Jacques Delors (the French Socialist President of the European Commission) are among the most popular figures in French politics today, and either would be favored to win an early presidential election against either Valéry Giscard d'Estaing or Jacques Chirac, the likely center-right candidates. As president and prime minister in the mid-1970s, the latter figures are perceived in France as representing the past, not a particular advantage in the context of an electorate clamoring for change. The RPR-UDF (Union pour la Démocratie Française) coalition has pledged to hold presidential primaries before 1995 in order to overcome the divisions that usually damage its electoral fortunes, and it is possible that a centrist leader from a younger generation—such as Parti Républicain leader François Léotard—could lead the center-right in a presidential race. Still, if Mitterrand were to provoke presidential elections before the legislatives in 1993, he could do so knowing that a Socialist would be more likely to occupy the Elysée than a leader of the right, and that this fact itself would be likely to help the left in the legislative elections that would follow. Mitterrand would not like to depart early, but he might savor the opportunity to spoil the fortunes of his old rivals as a second-best solution.

The direction of French security policy would also be unlikely to change significantly under Michel Rocard or Jacques Delors. Both are fervent “Europeans” who would be likely to continue France’s priority efforts to create a European security identity within the EC. Rocard has long supported European military cooperation, fully supports the Maastricht treaty, and has even begun to call for Europe “to act more and more like a nation in the future.”⁴ He is a strong

⁴See Michel Rocard, “Après Maastricht,” *Le Monde*, April 24, 1992, pp. 1, 8.

believer in transatlantic cooperation (including intensified French cooperation with NATO), but like the present French government believes in European autonomy: "Europe," he says, "must have the military means to support its policies."⁵ Delors, of course, is even more closely associated with the idea of a strong European defense identity built around the EC. He has called for a European Commission role in security policy—to "provide a single center for discussion and action"—and suggested multinational European forces and European "intervention units" as two possible expressions of European unity.⁶ He fully supports the Atlantic Alliance, but like most other French leaders believes European defense should be "embedded in the Community" and not simply a "bridge" between the EC and NATO.⁷ As the president of France, Delors might be less inclined or less able to push for European defense integration than he has as president of the European Commission, but he would certainly continue to make European security cooperation a top priority.

A Rocard or Delors presidency also might see French defense spending decline more precipitously than at present. Although both leaders publicly support the need for France to have a strong defense, both are also long-standing advocates of budgetary austerity *and* generous social spending, a combination that leaves little room for profligacy in the military. As prime minister during the late 1980s, Rocard—interested in cutting business taxes as a way to stimulate the economy—clashed often with a defense minister (Chevènement) reluctant to take major budgetary cuts. Delors had similar experiences when he tried to balance French budgets as finance minister in the early 1980s. Although cuts in the defense budget would be difficult to find for either leader if elected president, both could be expected to turn to increasing European cooperation and possible cuts in the nuclear force as possible solutions. Whereas both Rocard and Delors, like Mitterrand, eventually gave up their early opposition to the *force de frappe*, neither has associated his political standing as closely as Mitterrand to the control of French nuclear weapons. Advisers to Rocard question whether France can continue for long to maintain

⁵See Michel Rocard, "Defense and Security Challenges," *Europe and the United States*, Critical Issues No. 2, Council on Foreign Relations Press, New York, 1992, pp. 12, 14.

⁶Delors' ideas about European security are best outlined in his March 7, 1991 Alistair Buchan Memorial Lecture at the International Institute for Strategic Studies, published as Jacques Delors, "European integration and security," *Survival*, Vol. 33, No. 2, March/April 1991, pp. 99–109. Quotes from pp. 106, 108.

⁷*Ibid.*, p. 107.

Mitterrand's contention that "France's defense continues to rest essentially on its atomic force."⁸

A VICTORY FOR THE RPR-UDF

The most intriguing near-term political scenario for France is that which foresees a victory for the RPR-UDF coalition in legislative elections held on schedule next spring. Current opinion polls point to a clear RPR-UDF majority, which would lead to a new government from the center-right. Even if President Mitterrand chose to stay on for a renewal of the 1986–1988 experiment with "cohabitation," the prime minister, foreign minister, and defense minister would all likely come from the RPR and UDF, and a lame-duck and unpopular Mitterrand would probably have limited say over France's new security policy despite Fifth Republic traditions. Mitterrand's advisers have denied speculation that the president will provoke an early race for the Elysée or automatically resign if the right wins in 1993, which if true means that the RPR-UDF would have at least two years to make French security policy. If Mitterrand *did* resign after a victory for the right in 1993 (perhaps by shortening the presidential mandate to five years from the present seven and applying the new law to himself), the chances of a successful RPR or UDF presidential candidacy would be improved by the electorate's likely disinclination to impose a new period of cohabitation for the coming five years.⁹

When considering the possible security policies of an RPR-UDF government, one of the most salient features to note is that the two components of this coalition have always been fundamentally divided where European integration is concerned. The UDF—a descendant of the Mouvement Républicain Populaire that did so much to launch European integration behind Robert Schuman in the 1950s—has long been France's most profoundly "pro-European" political movement, and its leaders openly speak of European "federation" and "integration." Nearly all of the UDF has come out strongly behind its leader Valéry Giscard d'Estaing in favor of ratification of the Maastricht political and economic union treaty, and UDF leaders have long advocated a more far-reaching European defense. Party defense specialist

⁸Interviews in Paris, April 1992. For Mitterrand's statement, see his April 12, 1992 televised interview, "Les déclarations du Président de la République," *Le Monde*, April 14, 1992, p. 12.

⁹For Mitterrand's commitment to serve until the end of his seven-year mandate, see "M. Mitterrand: 'Je remplirai la mission qui m'a été renouvelée en 1988,'" *Le Monde*, May 7, 1992, p. 10; and Alain Rollat, "M. Mitterrand résolument offensif," *Le Monde*, April 11, 1992, p. 9.

Arthur Paecht now speaks of "an integrated European command" and calls for France "to give up part of her decision-making autonomy to a strong, integrated and welded European alliance."¹⁰ If the UDF were responsible for European security policy under a center-right government, that policy would not likely be very different from the one made by the Socialists now in power.

The RPR, on the other hand—a descendant of the Gaullist movements of the 1940s–1960s—has long been much more ambivalent about the European Community. The party still contains some fervent opponents of "supranationality" and some of its leading figures strongly oppose the delegations of sovereignty implicit in the Maastricht agreement.¹¹ Although the RPR leadership overcame its initial reservations and eventually backed approval of the Maastricht treaty, nearly half of the party supported a May 5, 1992 motion in the National Assembly to declare the text unconstitutional.¹² RPR leader Jacques Chirac has generally supported European integration in recent years, but it is not impossible that he would turn against it if electoral considerations seemed to warrant doing so: As recently as 1990, Chirac was arguing that "we French must conserve in our hands the essentials of the mastery of our destiny, with all the necessary instruments of doing so," and denouncing President Mitterrand's alleged intention to "eliminate the identity of France."¹³

¹⁰See Paecht's intervention in the National Assembly debates over the 1992 defense budget, "Compte-Rendu des débats parlementaires sur les crédits 1992 du Ministère de la Défense," Tome I, Assemblée Nationale, November 13, 1991, pp. 47–48, text furnished by SIRPA.

¹¹See, for example, the positions of RPR deputy Philippe Séguin and former Chirac adviser Marie-France Garaud in "Mme Garaud et M. Séguin combattent de 'toutes leurs forces' le traité de Maastricht," *Le Monde*, April 15, 1992, p. 8.

¹²Fifty-eight RPR deputies out of 126 voted in favor of Philippe Séguin's motion to throw out the proposed constitutional amendment that would allow the Maastricht treaty to be applied in France. See "Le RPR se scinde sur le traité de Maastricht," *Le Monde*, May 7, 1992, pp. 1, 8–9. For a good explanation of the party leadership's ambivalent support of the treaty, see RPR secretary general Alain Juppé's "Oui, si... à Maastricht," *Le Monde*, April 21, 1991, pp. 1, 8.

¹³Chirac criticized the "haste" with which Mitterrand was pushing for a "Western Europe that . . . would take away from nations the most essential diplomatic, economic, monetary, military and political powers that are indispensable to ensure their independence." See "Les divisions de l'opposition ébranlent le consensus sur la construction communautaire," *Le Monde*, April 12, 1990. Chirac's remark about eliminating the identity of France came after Mitterrand referred to a "federal finality" for Europe at the EC's Dublin summit, cited in Ian Davidson, "Gaullists seek nationalist votes in attack on French EC policy," *Financial Times*, June 28, 1990. Also see the nationalist line in the party's December 1990 party platform in Ian Davidson, "European federalism criticised by Chirac," *Financial Times*, December 6, 1990.

Not surprisingly, Chirac and other RPR leaders—such as the right's most likely prime ministerial choice Edouard Balladur—reject the present government's (and the UDF's) logic that political and security integration can be a means to "contain" German power in Europe. In Chirac's words:

It's either one thing or the other: Either you are convinced, as I am, that Germany is and will remain democratic, that she has learned the lessons of history and in this case there is no reason to "contain" her; or you are convinced of the opposite, in which case no structure will resist German power but would on the contrary be dominated by it. If Germany must be "balanced," this will be done first and foremost by the economic recovery of France and not by the game of European institutions that would be unable to hide our weaknesses.¹⁴

The RPR's insistence that East and Central European countries be brought quickly into the Community is also a sign that the party does not accept the Socialists' vision of an integrated European federation that would acquire nation-state-like characteristics and eventually build a "common defense."¹⁵ In short, the RPR's vision of Europe remains that of a Gaullist "Europe of states," and while European security cooperation would remain a priority under a Chirac or Balladur government, the nature of that priority would be likely to change.

Leaders and analysts of the French center-right have also distinguished themselves from the current government by calling for more robust French defense budgets. During 1991 Chirac argued that France would "inevitably be led to augment" its defense budget, former UDF defense minister André Giraud complained about the "hollowing out" of French defense, and conservative members of the senate called for "a noticeable increase in military credits."¹⁶ Such demands have tended to diminish since the December 1991 breakup of the Soviet Union, but many center-right leaders still believe that

¹⁴See Chirac, "Contradictions et convergences dans les relations franco-allemandes," p. 9.

¹⁵For RPR calls to "widen" the EC, see among many examples Alain Juppé, "Oui, si... à Maastricht," *Le Monde*, April 21, 1991, p. 8; Edouard Balladur, "Le monde change, il faut changer la politique aussi: La France et le nouvel ordre planétaire," *Le Figaro*, February 3, 1992, pp. 1, 6; and Daniel Carton, "Le RPR et l'UDF continuent de s'opposer sur l'avenir de l'Europe," *Le Monde*, April 16, 1992.

¹⁶See Chirac cited in Patrice-H. Desaubliaux, "Défense: l'année des décisions," *Le Figaro*, March 5, 1991, p. 8; André Giraud, "Notre gouvernement détruit tranquillement la défense," *Le Figaro*, August 1, 1991; and "Des sénateurs réclament une hausse sensible des crédits militaires," *Le Monde*, April 27, 1991. Also see the analyses of Philippe Séguin, "La nouvelle armée française," *Le Monde*, June 6, 1991, p. 2; and Jacques Baumel, "Réviser notre appareil militaire," *Le Figaro*, January 20, 1991, p. 2, and "Pour une armée nouvelle," *Le Figaro*, March 25, 1991.

"peace dividends" will be impossible given costly new requirements of the post-Cold War world.¹⁷ In addition to the current government's priorities such as satellites and new transport capabilities, the right also supports expanded research on anti-missile defense and the development of a professional army, both of which would be extremely costly. While it is of course always easier to call for higher defense spending in opposition than in office, an RPR-UDF coalition would be likely to support—and given its objectives obliged to support—somewhat higher defense budgets than the current or a future government of the left.

Finally, and perhaps most important from a U.S. perspective, France's policy toward NATO might change under a government led by the RPR or UDF. The leaders of the present opposition—in particular the "Gaullists" like Chirac and Balladur—have begun to call for a "more active" French role in NATO and for an expansion of some of the Alliance's roles. Balladur, for example, has come out explicitly for an extension of NATO guarantees to Poland, Czechoslovakia, and Hungary, and has argued that the Alliance should play a role in the dismantlement of nuclear weapons in the former Soviet Union.¹⁸ Both Chirac and Balladur have argued that "integration with 50,000 or 70,000 Americans in Europe will not have the same meaning as when the American contingent was 325,000," and advisers to Chirac say there should be "no taboos" in the French relationship with the United States.¹⁹ It should be remembered, moreover, that Chirac's views on security as prime minister from 1986–1988 often coincided with those of U.S. leaders, that the UDF has always been seen as highly "Atlanticist," and that it would probably be easier for a "Gaullist" government to bring France back into NATO's military organizations than for a government of the left. Finally, Balladur and other French conservatives have proposed that as an alternative to its "exclusive" focus on Germany and European unification France

¹⁷See, for example, the pessimistic assessment of the prospects for peace and stability in post-Cold War Europe in Pierre Lellouche, *Le nouveau monde: De l'ordre de Yalta au désordre des nations*, Grasset, Paris, 1992. Lellouche is Jacques Chirac's principal adviser on international security affairs.

¹⁸See Balladur, "Le monde change, il faut changer la politique aussi," *Le Figaro*, February 3, 1992, p. 6.

¹⁹For the first citation, see Jacques Chirac's February 26, 1992 speech at the Institut de France, "Contradictions et convergences dans les relations franco-allemandes depuis la chute du mur de Berlin," p. 13, text provided by office of Jacques Chirac. Balladur used similar words in "Le monde change, il faut changer la politique aussi," *Le Figaro*, February 3, 1992, p. 6. Also see Jacques Baumel, "Un défi pour les Européens," *Le Monde*, February 29, 1992, p. 3. Source for Chirac advisers: interviews in Paris, April 1992.

should seek to "improve her ties with the United States and Great Britain."²⁰

Any modification of French policy toward NATO under the center-right (or under a new Socialist government) would be limited by France's ongoing interest in a distinct international role, the sensitivity to American domination that is found across the political spectrum, and the European priority of all potential French governments. Even the sort of RPR-UDF leadership described above would have to be concerned about accusations of "Atlanticism" from both left and right, and might not be willing to make significant policy changes in favor of an institution that most French observers believe is in decline. Indeed, even if a new French government were to accept a more active role in NATO there is no guarantee that France's alliance policies would coincide with those of the United States—the objective of a full French entry into NATO would be primarily to enhance French influence in the Alliance, not to give it up. Still, the recent statements by RPR leaders and the process of generational change in the French government do make future prospects for a more comprehensive French role in NATO somewhat better than at present. Whether France plays such a role will probably depend on whether it perceives the United States as seeking to use NATO as a tool for U.S. hegemony or whether Washington seems genuinely willing to devolve more responsibility to Europe.

²⁰According to Balladur, "without abandoning the special Franco-German relationship, we must not close ourselves up in this exclusive game. France, whose vocation is not only European, can—while conserving her good relations with Germany—improve those that she has with the United States and Great Britain. This . . . is what justifies the maintenance of the Atlantic Alliance as well as the maintenance of American troops in Europe." See Balladur, "Le monde change, il faut changer la politique aussi," *Le Figaro*, February 3, 1992, p. 6.

5. CONCLUSIONS AND CONSIDERATIONS FOR THE UNITED STATES

Since the end of the Cold War in 1989, French security policy has evolved significantly on a number of different levels. The strategic nuclear force is no longer the *nec plus ultra* of French defense; the concept of military "integration," within Europe at least, is no longer a taboo; the French army is being given a new command structure and will be cut by more than 20 percent by 1997; and previously neglected areas like satellites, military intelligence, and force projection have become the new priorities of French defense. Particularly within the context of the European Community, France seems more prepared than ever to abandon long-standing positions and practices. Under the geopolitical and financial pressures outlined earlier in this report, French security has begun to adapt to the changing requirements of a new era.

At the same time, many traditional French perceptions, ambitions, and principles have clearly remained intact. France still aspires to global influence and European leadership and still seeks to augment European autonomy *vis à vis* the United States. French leaders still portray France as a great power, still associate international status with military and nuclear force, and cling tightly to their exclusive United Nations Security Council and nuclear roles. Most important where the United States is concerned, France remains suspicious of American motives in Europe and believes the United States is incapable of accepting anything less than a dominant role. Just as some American analysts believe France has staked its "great power" status excessively on military and nuclear power, many French analysts believe the United States has too closely associated its own self-image with its status as Europe's military protector. When in March 1992 a Pentagon draft document was leaked that suggested that the United States should try to prevent the emergence of a rival superpower, many French observers felt vindicated in their assessment that the United States really was out to dominate the world.¹

Recent French positions on European security and defense are not an aberration but rather the reflection of deep-seated beliefs that are the product of French history and culture. Unlike the Germans, the

¹Interviews, April 1992. On the Pentagon document, see "Pentagon's New World Order: U.S. to Reign Supreme," *International Herald Tribune*, March 9, 1992, pp. 1-2.

French do not have a past that prohibits them from playing a high-profile international military role, and, as victors in the two World Wars, they have not dissociated their conception of national greatness from military power. Unlike the British, the French do not have linguistic and cultural links with the United States that might enable them to exercise international influence through Washington. Instead, the French—so long part of a great power and yet so often all too dependent on others for their security—still consider their national identity and global stature to be linked to their ability to defend themselves and to have an impact on the most important matters of international affairs.

Such perspectives are not simply those of a political elite steeped in an exclusive version of history but are reflected throughout a public opinion often said to be indifferent to them. To be sure, the average French citizen is more concerned with domestic questions such as unemployment or immigration and spends little time actively thinking about European security or France's role in the world. But there is nonetheless a widespread feeling in France that the country's international image should be upheld, and that military power is still a relevant barometer of that image. In a poll taken in March 1991, for example, just after the Gulf War, 72 percent of French people polled believed that France was a "great power," 68 percent believed this was so in terms of the French army, and 72 percent believed it was so in terms of France's nuclear force.² When asked whether they agreed with the statement that their country "must have a strong defense in order to defend its territory," 46 percent of the French "agreed strongly," in contrast to only 17 percent in Germany.³ And when asked at the conclusion of the Gulf War which countries would "play an important role in the Middle East," 77 percent of the French believed France would play such a role while only 52 percent thought the United States would.⁴ Polling data, of course, can be highly subjective and the effect of public opinion on policy itself is not clear;

²Not surprisingly, only 29 percent of the Americans, and 25 percent of the British, agreed that France was a great power. See "La France est-elle encore une grande puissance?" *L'Express*, March 1, 1991, pp. 28–33.

³The combined tally for "agreed strongly" and "agreed somewhat" was 84 percent in France and 59 percent in Germany. When asked whether war was sometimes necessary to protect a country's vital interests, 68 percent of the French agreed strongly or somewhat, compared with 42 percent of the Germans. Polling data from the May 1991 Commissioned Personal Interview Surveys provided by the United States Information Agency.

⁴See "La France est-elle encore une grande puissance?" *L'Express*, March 1, 1991, pp. 28–33.

but such results do suggest that the image the French have of their country is not unrelated to the policies that France pursues.

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For many Americans, including many in the U.S. government itself, French security policy since the end of the Cold War has been both unconstructive and inconsistent. The French claim to support retaining an American security role in Europe but refuse to participate in NATO's new multinational corps or to allow the basing of NATO institutions and forces in France. French leaders profess an attachment to the maintenance of a reformed NATO but refuse some of the very adaptations that seem necessary to keep the Alliance alive. They seem to want to limit NATO to traditional functions that are clearly outdated and no longer relevant to the security needs of the continent. Moreover, U.S. critics argue, France's desire to create an autonomous European security identity seems to leave the United States in the unenviable position of being present in Europe—and thus implicated in European security crises—without having a sufficient say over the initial management of those crises. As a result, by pursuing a strategy that renders NATO irrelevant and makes the U.S. role in Europe unacceptable, the French are seen to be in the process of bringing about a self-fulfilling prophecy about an American withdrawal. To many Americans, if French predictions of American isolationism come true, France's own policies will be largely to blame.

Despite the evident and often warranted frustration in Washington, the United States has a clear interest in finding a way to come to terms with France. For better or for worse, France is a key player in the attempts to reshape Western security after the Cold War, and arrangements that do not include close French-American cooperation will never be optimal. If mutual French and American suspicions of each other's intentions can be overcome (admittedly no easy task), it is possible to imagine a new French-American security relationship that would serve both countries' interests.

The American interest in a better security relationship with France, and in supporting French efforts to develop European defense, is manifold. First, France is one of the few countries in Europe that seems genuinely willing to play, and to devote resources to, an active international security role. The United States, with its strained economic resources and pressing domestic problems, increasingly needs assistance in the management of international security affairs and would be well served by a more active and more capable European partner. With U.S. forces to be reduced significantly in the coming years, it seems clear that greater European military support will

be more necessary than in the past when future conflicts arise. France—with its own military ambitions, its willingness to accept the risks and responsibilities of international action, and its diversified and relatively large forces—could be a key global ally for the United States as it is forced to rely more heavily on a multilateral approach.

Second, France's emphasis upon the European component of the transatlantic relationship could prove to be the most effective means to develop the sort of capable and responsible "European pillar" that the United States has always claimed to seek. Except perhaps for Great Britain, most countries in Europe are more likely to play an active international role—and to share the burden of that role—as part of an organized European entity than as part of a fragmented one. This is especially true for Germany, which might find it easier to act "out-of-area" under a European flag than under a NATO or national one. Moreover, as the Germans often point out, a European security identity can serve as a means to bring France closer to NATO "through the back door." Rightly or wrongly, France is more likely to play a full role in NATO as part of a European identity (equal to the United States) than as France alone. So long as adequate transparency between the European entity and NATO is ensured, the United States should welcome a united Europe that can act more decisively than in the past, even if this entails a risk that Europe will not always follow Washington's lead.

Third, France's efforts to form a true European security identity by no means preclude close European—and French—cooperation with the United States. What the French seek is the right for Europe to be able to decide on questions of defense and security not only "out-of-area," as some would have it, but also within Europe itself. Nowhere have the French suggested that their *preference* would be to do without the United States, and under most plausible future scenarios, the opposite would be more likely. Indeed, a look at the relative weakness of current European military forces—and the unlikely prospects for a major buildup—should calm American concerns that the Europeans will soon want to take military actions without them. Instead, an arrangement can easily be imagined that allows for the possibility of an autonomous use of European military force—in cases (such as Yugoslavia) where the United States was unwilling or unable to get involved—without prejudicing the United States' right or ability to play a major role in Europe when appropriate.

Fourth, it is important to realize that any attempts to isolate France from its European partners—or even to take advantage of France's own isolation—will not, in the end, work. Past experience has shown

that political pressure tends to stiffen rather than to undermine French resolve, and injunctions from Washington that condescendingly warn the Europeans against pursuing what France considers to be fundamental objectives are bound to backfire.⁵ By reminding their "Atlantic" allies in Europe that an autonomous European defense "might not be understood in the United States," Americans risk helping to bring about the very result they claim to fear: a disunited Europe incapable of taking decisive action.⁶ It would be unfortunate if the Americans were to produce the same sort of "self-fulfilling prophecy" of which they accuse France. Moreover, not only is France unwilling to give up its long-term goal of a true European security identity, but most of the other Europeans are unwilling to give up on France. Even the Germans—good "Atlanticists" by necessity for more than 40 years—have always considered close relations with France indispensable, and they believe that a fundamental split with the French must be avoided at all costs. Notwithstanding the continuing German interest in a strong transatlantic tie, it is highly unlikely that Bonn would ever accept a strategy that would tend to separate it from Paris.

If the French "get their way," and if the Europeans take on the primary responsibility for their own security, the United States will end up with less influence on the continent than in the past. But this is happening anyway, and maintaining American leadership in NATO is unlikely to halt the trend. The United States' ability to translate its military presence in Europe into political or economic leverage (on the decline for years) has been greatly reduced by the end of the Cold War, and trying to exercise such leverage now can only be counterproductive. The American role and presence in Europe should be based on common interests and shared values, not on the unfounded hope that the United States can derive advantages from it unrelated to security.

It is far from obvious, of course, that even enhanced American efforts to overcome French suspicions will work, and long-standing French resistance to "American hegemony" may prevent France from coming closer to the United States. American policymakers who have con-

⁵As one supposedly "Atlanticist" former French government official put it in a private conversation with the author, "the arrogance with which American policymakers have been treating Europe is enough to make *me* anti-American. And if *I* am feeling this way, can you imagine how the nationalists are reacting?" Interview in Paris, June 1991.

⁶These were the words used by U.S. Ambassador to NATO William H. Taft IV in a speech at the International Institute for Strategic Studies in London, February 8, 1991. See the text distributed by the U.S. Embassy in London.

cluded that there is "nothing they can do" to involve France more closely in Atlantic structures may well be right, and if the French choose to isolate themselves from such structures there is little the United States can do to stop them. American concerns about a European security identity that would exclude the United States are legitimate, and France and the United States should continue to work hard to find a way to allow Europe to develop its own defense structures and means that does not marginalize the United States. It would be unfortunate if in the area of international security, by no means a zero-sum game, the United States and France were to become adversaries rather than partners.

To avoid such an outcome, there are steps both sides can take. The United States should not oppose attempts to create a European security and defense identity (which would at worst be irrelevant because it would be ineffectual, and which would at best strengthen Atlantic security while reducing American burdens), and should do more (by genuinely supporting other institutions such as the EC, CSCE, and UN) to show France that the rejuvenation of NATO is not meant to overshadow everything else. American policymakers should resist the temptation to isolate France by pressuring their "Atlantic" allies in Europe and they should attempt to show France that U.S. aims in Europe are security, stability, and partnership rather than hegemony or political control. France, on the other hand, must make it clear to the United States that it seeks a European entity that would work closely and transparently with the United States and that it fully welcomes an important security role for the Americans in Europe. The United States will not accept a security role in Europe if that role is simply to back up the Europeans when called upon to do so. If both sides go out of their way to reassure the other, there is no objective reason that fruitful transatlantic arrangements cannot be created for the post-Cold War world.